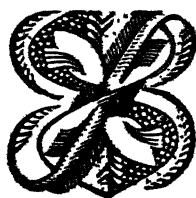


LAOCOÖN
NATHAN THE WISE
MINNA VON BARNHELM



LESSING

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POETRY & THE DRAMA

LAOCOÖN, NATHAN THE WISE
and MINNA VON BARNHELM
BY GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING
EDITED BY WILLIAM A. STEEL

Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.

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GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING, born in 1729 in Upper Lusatia. Educated at Leipzig University. Visited England, and afterwards lived in Berlin and Leipzig. Travelled to Italy, 1772. Died in 1781.

INTRODUCTION

A feature in the story of German literature which all its critics have remarked is the rapidity of its development in the course of the eighteenth century, and the astonishing contrast between the opening and the closing decades of the period. The second half of the century witnessed the outburst of splendour in Goethe and Schiller and Kant, and showed Germany keeping step with England and France. The fertilising influences of the Renaissance had reached Germany late, for in England the Elizabethan age had come, and flourished in full luxuriance, and Milton had followed his greater predecessor, whilst in Germany poetry, drama and literature generally still remained a poverty-stricken and almost negligible product.

There were special reasons for this retardation. Early in the seventeenth century the curse of war had brooded heavily over Europe, with particular darkness over Germany—for thirty years the cock-pit where was fought out the fateful struggle between the Catholic South and the Protestant North. On both sides the armies were mercenaries, and their marches to and fro were marches of military locusts, devouring and destroying everywhere. Nor was it merely material desolation that resulted, the springs of intellectual and spiritual activity also were choked in the universal debacle. The war was over by 1648, but a prolonged period was required for complete recovery.

Another hindrance to the advance of German letters was the absence of national unity, the want of an acknowledged centre of the national life. Berlin, Leipzig, Hamburg, all contended for the central place, at least in the production of books and in theatrical enterprise, and thus an advantage was lost which England and France enjoyed by their great capitals. It is also worth remarking that whatever furtherance for intellectual activities can be looked for from men in the high

places of society was conspicuously wanting. The King himself, the great Frederick, besides being almost exclusively absorbed by the interests of his army, was cold not only to German literature but even to the German language. He liked to speak French and to have Frenchmen about him. There is nothing blameworthy in Frederick's preference. Who is there that does not prefer lightness, clarity and grace to heaviness and clumsiness? If we criticise the mistaken notions of French dramatists of those days, their bondage to ancient rules and examples, let us at the same time freely acknowledge their merits. Lessing himself confesses that he owed much to them, acknowledging a particular obligation to Diderot, as "the man who has taken so great a share in forming his taste. Be this what it may," he writes, "I know that without Diderot's example and doctrines it would have taken a quite different direction." Frederick's preference for French writers, then, can be easily understood, yet the natural consequence of his attitude was undoubtedly to chill and discourage German authors and to undermine their efforts. Frederick's real service was in a different field, he brought to Germany a national self-consciousness and self-confidence which it had hitherto lacked.

When, moreover, German literature began once more to show signs of vitality and renewal, the leaders who undertook its superintendence were unfortunately unequal to the task. They wanted the natural genius which the great business demanded, and they followed mistaken paths. For some time before Lessing's birth in 1729, the outstanding literary figure was Gottsched, dictator for a generation in German letters, implicitly obeyed by all who wrote. The praise cannot be withheld from him of labouring indefatigably to stir up amongst aspiring men the ambition to write well; but by all accounts we have of him his place was distinctly in the second class, a man pedantical and essentially prosaic, without the gift of critical discernment. This was characteristically shown in the book he issued for the guidance of poets—*Kritische Dichtkunst für die Deutschen*, a volume of precepts and rules from which none must deviate. Lessing quietly laughs at Gottsched's classification of a collection of poems he published—1st class, poems addressed to Royal personages; 2nd, those addressed to counts, noble people, and such-like; 3rd,

friendly lyrics! It was idle to look for inspiration to Gottsched's rules and precepts may furnish useful warnings against grave blunders, but they also can easily become bonds and fetters. The worst of his counsel was that he directed his disciples to wrong models and false ideals, they were instructed to imitate the French in their artificial and pseudo-classic drama, in short, to imitate what was itself an imitation. There could be only one result—originality and independence were discountenanced, and the denial of freedom led to lifeless and uninspired performances. To rely on a code of rules, or even on patterns drawn from Greek perfection, was a mistake. A wiser counsel by far is embodied in the old poet's words—"Look in thy heart, and write!"

No wonder, then, that under tuition like Gottsched's the field of German poetry and drama took on the aspect of Ezekiel's vision, a valley of dry bones. It had, however, now not long to wait for an inspiring breath to restore it to life and vigour, to bring flesh again on the dry bones, and set it on its feet, standing up boldly in freedom and self-reliance. After a faint dawn of day in Klopstock's poem *Der Messias*, a rather ineffectual echo of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the full sunlight broke on the desolate scene from the genius of Lessing. His was the life-giving spirit. No qualifications were lacking to him for the task. From his early boyhood he was a student and lover of books, and he speedily acquired a knowledge of Greek and Roman literature that was extraordinarily wide and exact, as a thousand passages in *Laocoön* bear witness. His faultless taste was early formed, and his native gifts, a keen analytic intellect and instinctive justness of judgment, made him the perfect critic. No better plan of education could have been framed for him than to be permitted to browse in the library at home, and to be taught the rudiments of learning by his father, who did this work so thoroughly that young Lessing, entering at the age of twelve the "Prince's School" in Meissen, immediately took a foremost place among his fellows. "Tasks which others find too hard," wrote the rector to the father, "are child's play to him."

The design of Lessing's parents was that he should follow his father's profession. This was entirely contrary to his own inclinations. It was only after years of painful struggle, in

which he had to endure much misunderstanding and censure of the bitterest kind, that he could enter upon his chosen career as a dramatist and journalist. His father and mother were puntans of the stratest sect, with a fanatical fear and hatred of the stage, an attitude which even now is not unknown amongst ourselves, especially in provincial places. Indirectly, no doubt, the narrow-mindedness and persecution of which he was so intimate a witness were a stimulus to Lessing in the frequent controversies of his career, in which he was always a champion of freedom and tolerance. With his characteristic tenacity he held to his own choice.

Parenthetically, it may be remarked how great a part of Lessing's energy was expended in controversy not only on dramatic or purely literary questions, though these drew volume after volume from him, but on theology and philosophy, which largely engaged his pen for years together. It was labour he delighted in, for he was a born controversialist. His keen wit, his stores of exact and many-sided knowledge, gave him a peculiar advantage in these contests, and he enjoyed the still greater advantage that he contended only for truth, when his opponents were more concerned for orthodoxy. The enemies he chiefly loved to assail were bigotry, narrow-mindedness and pretension. When Lessing began in earnest his efforts to raise German literature and drama to a higher level, he followed his favourite method of controversy and chose for an object of attack, Gottsched, the literary dictator, as the embodiment of the principles and practice that were hindering the advance.

"Our tragedies were full of nonsense, bombast, filth, and the wit of the mob. Our comedies consisted of disguises and enchantments, and blows were their wittiest ideas. To see this corruption it was not necessary to be the finest and greatest spirit. And Herr Gottsched was not the first who saw it; he was only the first who had confidence in his own power to remove it. And how did he set to work? He understood a little French, and began to translate; everyone who could rhyme and understand '*Our, monsieur,*' he encouraged also to translate. . . . If the masterpieces of Shakespeare, with some modest changes, had been translated, I am convinced that better consequences would have followed than could follow from acquaintance with Corneille and Racine . . .

For genius can only be kindled by genius; and most easily by a genius which seems to have to thank nature for everything and does not frighten us away by the tedious perfections of art " 1

We have here one out of many proofs of Lessing's acquaintance with and sympathetic appreciation of the English dramatic writers. The drama is, of course, his chief interest, but his knowledge of other departments of our literature extended beyond it. In an article contributed to a quarterly magazine projected in Berlin he has the following on an effort by some of his friends to imitate the essays of the English *Spectator* :—" You know who were the first authors in this kind of literature—men wanting neither in wit, thought, scholarship nor knowledge of the world—Englishmen who, in the greatest calm, and in easy circumstances, could study with attention whatever influences the spirit and manners of the nation. But who are their imitators among us? For the most part, young writings, who had scarce mastered the German language." 2

The first really notable dramatic work of Lessing was a prose tragedy, *Miss Sara Sampson*, in which the influence of English models was immediately traced, and which was forthwith pronounced a novel type—a "*bürgerliches Trauerspiel*" it was styled, or "tragedy of common life." This piece had, therefore, an importance in the history of the German theatre beyond its intrinsic literary or theatrical value, it marked the beginning of an epoch, and became the favourite type on the German stage. From the day of its production the regard of German playwrights was turned not to France but to England. Lessing had written successful comedies when scarcely out of his boyhood, but *Miss Sara Sampson* made him known to the nation and to foreign critics. It also confirmed Lessing in the choice of dramatic writing as his proper sphere. More triumphant successes were soon to follow. It was in the three well-known dramas—*Emilia Galotti*, *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Nathan der Weise*—that Lessing reached his highest level.

It is perhaps the last-named that is best known, but each of the three is worthy of his genius. *Emilia Galotti* is a tragedy on the lines of the story of Roman Virginia, most poignantly

¹ Sime's *Lessing*, Vol. I p. 181.

² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

affecting, well-constructed for stage purposes (eminently *buhnen-fähig* as the Germans say), but almost too painful for popular acceptance *Minna von Barnhelm* is the best of German comedies, all critics agree, it is a story of military life in the Frederician time, full of humour and good-humour, touched here and there, but only slightly, with the German weakness of over-sentimentality, and having the great merit of being as enjoyable to-day as when it was first produced This in itself is a testimony to the human quality of it. The characterisation is superbly worked out, every figure an unmistakable personality It is still frequently staged *Nathan der Weise* is more properly a dramatic poem than a stage play, an eloquent plea for *tolerance*, and embodying much of the earnest thought of Lessing upon subjects lying nearest to his heart These two plays, along with the famous essay in literary criticism, *Laocoön*, are the fragments of Lessing's immense production presented in this little volume of translations. The *Laocoön* is too large and too multifarious for any attempt at detailed description in this brief preface In its own department of literary criticism it is authoritative, and one of the acknowledged classics of the world

Before closing these introductory words something should be said of the personal fortunes of Lessing He was born in 1729 in Kamenz, a small town in the kingdom of Saxony, where his father was Pastor Primarius, or chief pastor, of the place. His short life of fifty-two years, ending in 1781 in Brunswick, was a record of incessant and ill-rewarded labour, vexed perpetually by care and poverty He quickly gained his wide reputation as a critic and dramatist, and his work, especially his excellent dramatic pieces, ought to have brought him at least the means of comfortable living, if not a fortune. So far from this was his experience that, at the close, what he possessed did not suffice to cover the expenses of his funeral. One secret of his troubles was the constant demands upon him for help made by the poor pastor's large family at home, whose members thought that a man so distinguished as their famous brother must have an income corresponding, whereas he was frequently himself in the most desperate straits. Until 1776, when he was forty-seven, he was not in a position to marry. His wife, Eva König, to whom he had been greatly attached for many years, was the widow of a manufacturer in

Vienna It was the happiest of unions, but even here ill-luck pursued him, for his wife lived only one year after marriage, dying in childbirth

Lessing's days were few and full of trouble, they were full also of most fruitful labour After two centuries his fame continues, based firmly on his dramatic poems, and even more securely on his critical writings, which the world will not willingly let die.

W. A. S.

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(1729-1781)

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LAOCOÖN

OR

THE LIMITS OF PAINTING AND POETRY:

WITH INCIDENTAL ILLUSTRATIONS ON VARIOUS
POINTS IN THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ART

Ἔλη καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως διαφέρουσι
(Πλουτ. ποτ. Αθ. κατὰ Π. ἢ κατὰ Σ. ἐνδ.)



LAOCOON

PREFACE

THE first who likened painting and poetry to each other must have been a man of delicate perception, who found that both arts affected him in a similar manner. Both, he realised, present to us appearance as reality, absent things as present; both deceive, and the deceit of either is pleasing.

A second sought to penetrate to the essence of the pleasure, and discovered that in both it flows from one source. Beauty, the conception of which we at first derive from bodily objects, has general rules which can be applied to various things: to actions, to thoughts, as well as to forms.

A third, who reflected on the value and the application of these general rules, observed that some of them were predominant rather in painting, others rather in poetry; that, therefore, in the latter poetry could help out painting, in the former painting help out poetry, with illustrations and examples.

The first was the amateur; the second the philosopher; the third the critic.

The two former could not easily make a false use either of their feeling or of their conclusions. But in the remarks of the critic, on the other hand, almost everything depends on the justice of their application to the individual case; and, where there have been fifty witty to one clear-eyed critic, it would have been a miracle if this application had at all times been made with the circumspection needful to hold the balance true between the two arts.

Supposing that Apelles and Protogenes in their lost treatises upon painting confirmed and illustrated the rules of the same by the already settled rules of poetry, then one can certainly believe it must have been done with the moderation and exactitude with which we still find Aristotle, Cicero, Horace, Quintilian, in their writings, applying the principles and practice of painting to eloquence and poetry. It is the prerogative of the ancients, in everything to do neither too much nor too little.

But we moderns in several things have considered ourselves

their betters, when we transformed their pleasant little byeways to highroads, even if the shorter and safer highroads shrink again to footpaths as they lead us through the wilds.

The startling antithesis of the Greek Voltaire, that painting is a dumb poetry, and poetry a vocal painting, certainly was not to be found in any manual. It was a sudden inspiration, such as Simonides had more than once, the true element in it is so illuminating that we are inclined to ignore what in it is false or doubtful.

Nevertheless, the ancients did not ignore it. Rather, whilst they confined the claim of Simonides solely to the effect of the two arts, they did not omit to point out that, notwithstanding the complete similarity of this effect, they were yet distinct, both in their subjects and in the manner of their imitation (ὅλη καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως).

But entirely as if no such difference existed, many of our most recent critics have drawn from that correspondence between painting and poetry the crudest conclusions in the world. Now they force poetry into the narrower bounds of painting; and again, they propose to painting to fill the whole wide sphere of poetry. Everything that is right for the one is to be granted to the other also; everything which in the one pleases or displeases is necessarily to please or displease in the other; and, obsessed by this notion, they utter in the most confident tone the shallowest judgments; and we see them, in dealing with the works of poets and painters beyond reproach, making it a fault if they deviate from one another, and casting blame now on this side and now on that, according as they themselves have a taste for poetry or for painting.

Indeed, this newer criticism has in part seduced the virtuosos themselves. It has engendered in poetry the rage for description, and in painting the rage for allegorising, in the effort to turn the former into a speaking picture without really knowing what she can and should paint, and to turn the latter into a silent poem without considering in what measure she can express general concepts and not at the same time depart from her vocation and become a freakish kind of writing.

To counteract this false taste and these ill-founded judgments is the primary object of the pages that follow. They have come together incidentally, according to the order of my reading, instead of being built up by a methodical development of general principles. They are, therefore, rather unordered *collectanea* for a book than themselves a book.

Yet I flatter myself that even as such they are not wholly to be despised. Of systematic books there is no lack amongst us Germans. Out of a few assumed definitions to deduce most logically whatever we will—this we can manage as well as any nation in the world.

Baumgarten confessed that for a great part of the examples in his *Æsthetics* he was indebted to Gesner's Dictionary. If my argument is not as conclusive as Baumgarten's, at all events my examples will taste more of the original sources.

As I started, as it were, from Laocoon and return to him several times, I have desired to give him a share in the superscription. Some other little digressions concerning various points in the history of ancient art contribute less to my purpose, and they only stand here because I cannot hope ever to find for them a more suitable place.

I would further remind the reader that under the name of Painting I include the plastic arts in general, and am not prepared to maintain that under the name of Poetry I may not have had some regard also to the other arts whose method of imitation is progressive.

I

THE general distinguishing excellence of the Greek masterpieces in painting and sculpture Herr Winckelmann places in a noble simplicity and quiet greatness, both in arrangement and in expression. "Just as the depths of the sea," he says, "always remain quiet, however the surface may rage, in like manner the expression in the figures of the Greek artists shows under all passions a great and steadfast soul.

"This soul is depicted in the countenance of the Laocoön, and not in the countenance alone, under the most violent sufferings. The pain which discovers itself in every muscle and sinew of the body, and which, without regarding the face and other parts, one seems almost oneself to feel from the painfully contracted abdomen alone—this pain, I say, yet expresses itself in the countenance and in the entire attitude without passion. He raises no agonising cry, as Virgil sings of his Laocoon; the opening of the mouth does not permit it: much rather is it an oppressed and weary sigh, as Sadolet describes it. The pain of the body and the greatness of the soul are by the whole build of the figure distributed and, as it were, weighed out in equal parts. Laocoon suffers, but he suffers like the Philoctetes of Sophocles: his misery touches us to the soul; but we should like to be able to endure misery as this great man endures it.

"The expression of so great a soul goes far beyond the fashioning which beautiful Nature gives. The artist must have felt in himself the strength of spirit which he impressed upon the marble. Greece had artist and philosopher in one person, and more than one Metrodorus. Wisdom stretched out her hand to Art and breathed more than common souls into the figures that she wrought," etc., etc.

The remark which is fundamental here—that the pain does not show itself in the countenance of Laocoön with the passion which one would expect from its violence—is perfectly just. This, too, is incontestable, that even in this very point in which a sciolist might judge the artist to have come short of Nature

and not to have reached the true pathos of the pain : that just here, I say, his wisdom has shone out with especial brightness.

Only in the reason which Winckelmann gives for this wisdom, and in the universality of the rule which he deduces from this reason, I venture to be of a different opinion.

I confess that the disapproving side-glance which he casts on Virgil at first took me rather aback ; and, next to that, the comparison with Philoctetes I will make this my starting-point, and write down my thoughts just in the order in which they come.

“Laocoon suffers like the Philoctetes of Sophocles.” How, then, does the latter suffer? It is singular that his suffering has left with us such different impressions—the complaints, the outcry, the wild curses, with which his pain filled the camp and disturbed the sacrifices and all the sacred functions, resounded no less terribly through the desert island, as it was in part they that banished him thither. What sounds of anger, of lamentation, of despair, by which even the poet in his imitation made the theatre resound ! People have found the third act of this drama disproportionately short compared with the rest. From this one gathers, say the critics, that the ancient dramatists considered an equal length of acts as of small consequence. That, indeed, I believe, but in this question I should prefer to base myself upon another example than this. The piteous outcries, the whimpering, the broken *ἄ, ἄ, φεῦ, ἀτταταῖ, ἄμοι, μοι!* the whole long lines full of *παπα, παπα*, of which this act consists and which must have been declaimed with quite other hesitations and drawings-out of utterance than are needful in a connected speech, doubtless made this act last pretty well as long in the presentation as the others. On paper it appears to the reader far shorter than it would to the listeners.

To cry out is the natural expression of bodily pain. Homer’s wounded warriors not seldom fall to the ground with cries. Venus scratched screams loudly ; not in order that she may be shown as the soft goddess of pleasure, but rather that suffering Nature may have her rights. For even the iron Mars, when he feels the spear of Diomedes, screams so horribly, like ten thousand raging warriors at once, that both hosts are terrified.

However high in other respects Homer raises his heroes above Nature, they yet ever remain faithful to her when it comes to the point of feeling pain and injury, and to the utterance of this feeling by cries, or tears, or abusive language.

By their deeds they are creatures of a superior order, by their sensibilities mere men

I am well aware that we Europeans of a wiser posterity know better how to control our mouth and our eyes. Politeness and dignity forbid cries and tears. The active fortitude of the first rude ages has with us been transformed into the fortitude of endurance. Yet even our own ancestors were greater in the latter than in the former. Our ancestors, however, were barbarians. To conceal all pains, to face the stroke of death with unaltered eye, to die smiling under the teeth of vipers, to bewail neither his sin nor the loss of his dearest friend, are the marks of the ancient Northern hero. Palnatoko gave his Jomsburgers the command to fear nothing nor once to utter the word fear.

Not so the Greek ! He both felt and feared ; he uttered his pain and his trouble ; he was ashamed of no human weaknesses ; but none must hold him back on the way to honour or from the fulfilment of duty. What with the barbarian sprang from savagery and hardness, was wrought in him by principle. With him heroism was like the hidden sparks in the flint, which sleep quietly so long as no outward force awakes them, and take from the stone neither its clearness nor its coldness. With the barbarian, heroism was a bright devouring flame, which raged continually and consumed, or at least darkened, every other good quality in him. When Homer leads out the Trojans to battle with wild outcries, and the Greeks, on the other hand, in resolute silence, the commentators remark with justice that the poet in this wishes to depict those as barbarians and these as civilised people. I am surprised that they have not remarked in another passage a similar characteristic contrast. The opposing hosts have concluded a truce ; they are busy with the burning of their dead, which on neither side takes place without hot tears : δάκρυα θερμά χέοντες. But Priam forbids his Trojans to weep ; οὐδ' εἶα κλαίειν Πρίαμος μέγας. He forbids them to weep, says the Dacier, because he dreads that they will weaken themselves too much and return to battle on the morrow with less courage. Good ! But I ask, Why must Priam dread this ? Why does not Agamemnon, too, give his Greeks the same command ? The sense of the poet goes deeper. He would teach us that only the civilised Greek can at the same time weep and be brave, whilst the uncivilised Trojan in order to be so must first stifle all human feeling. Νεμεσσῶμαί γε μὲν οὐδὲν κλαίειν, in another

place, he puts in the mouth of the understanding son of wise Nestor.

It is worthy of remark that amongst the few tragedies that have come down to us from antiquity two pieces are to be found in which bodily pain is not the smallest part of the calamity that befalls the suffering hero : there is, besides the Philoctetes, the dying Hercules. And even the latter Sophocles represents complaining, whining, weeping and crying aloud. Thanks to our polite neighbours, those masters of the becoming, to-day a whimpering Philoctetes, a screaming Hercules, would be the most laughable, the most unendurable persons on the stage. It is true one of their latest dramatists has ventured on Philoctetes. But would he venture to show them the true Philoctetes?

Amongst the lost dramas of Sophocles is numbered even a "Laocoon." Would that Fate had only granted us this Laocoon also ! From the slight references made to it by some ancient grammarians it is not easy to gather how the theme was handled. Of one thing I feel sure : that the poet will not have depicted Laocoon as more of a stoic than Philoctetes and Hercules. All stoicism is untheatrical, and our pity is always proportionate to the suffering which the interesting subject expresses. If we see him bear his misery with greatness of soul, then indeed this greatness of soul will excite our admiration, but admiration is a cold emotion, whose passive wonder excludes every other warmer passion as well as every other more significant representation.

And now I come to the inference I wish to draw. If it is true that outcries on the feeling of bodily pain, especially according to the ancient Greek way of thinking, can quite well consist with a great soul ; then the expression of such a soul cannot be the reason why, nevertheless, the artist in his marble refuses to imitate this crying : there must be other grounds why he deviates here from his rival, the poet, who expresses this crying with obvious intention.

II

Whether it be fable or history that Love prompted the first attempt in the plastic arts, it is at least certain that she was never weary of lending her guiding hand to the ancient masters. For if painting, as the art which imitates bodies on plane sur-

faces, is now generally practised with an unlimited range of subject, certainly the wise Greek set her much straiter bounds, and confined her solely to the imitation of beautiful bodies. His artist portrayed nothing but the beautiful; even the ordinary beautiful, beauty of inferior kinds, was for him only an occasional theme, an exercise, a recreation. In his work the perfection of the subject itself must give delight; he was too great to demand of those who beheld it that they should content themselves with the bare, cold pleasure arising from a well-caught likeness or from the daring of a clever effort, in his art nothing was dearer to him, and to his thinking nothing nobler, than the ultimate purpose of art.

"Who will wish to paint you, when no one wishes to see you?" says an old epigrammatist concerning an extremely misshapen man. Many a more modern artist would say, "Be you as misshapen as is possible, I will paint you nevertheless. Though, indeed, no one may wish to see you, people will still wish to see my picture; not in so far as it represents you, but in so far as it is a demonstration of my art, which knows how to make so good a likeness of such a monster."

To be sure, with pitiful dexterities that are not ennobled by the worth of their subjects, the propensity to such rank boasting is too natural for the Greeks to have escaped without their Pauson, their Pyreicus. They had them; but they did strict justice upon them. Pauson, who confined himself entirely to the beauty of vulgar things and whose lower taste delighted most in the faulty and ugly in human shape, lived in the most sordid poverty. And Pyreicus, who painted, with all the diligence of a Dutch artist, nothing but barbers' shops, filthy factories, donkeys and cabbages, as if that kind of thing had so much charm in Nature and were so rarely to be seen, got the nickname of the rhyparograph, the dirt-painter, although the luxurious rich weighed his works against gold, to help out their merit by this imaginary value.

The magistrates themselves considered it not unworthy of their attention to keep the artist by force in his proper sphere. The law of the Thebans, which commanded him in his imitation to add to beauty, and forbade under penalties the exaggeration of the ugly, is well known. It was no law against the bungler, as it is usually, and even by Junius, considered. It condemned the Greek "Ghezzi"; the unworthy artifice of achieving likeness by exaggeration of the uglier parts of the original: in a word, caricature.

Indeed, it was direct from the spirit of the Beautiful that the law of the Hellanodiken proceeded. Every Olympian victor received a statue; but only to the three-times victor was an Iconian statue awarded. Of mediocre portraits there ought not to be too many amongst works of art. For although even a portrait admits of an ideal, still the likeness must be the first consideration; it is the ideal of a certain man, not the ideal of a man.

We laugh when we hear that with the ancients even the arts were subject to municipal laws. But we are not always right when we laugh. Unquestionably the laws must not usurp power over the sciences, for the ultimate purpose of the sciences is truth. Truth is a necessity of the soul, and it is nothing but tyranny to offer her the slightest violence in satisfying this essential need. The ultimate purpose of the arts, on the other hand, is pleasure, and pleasure can be dispensed with. So, of course, it may depend on the law-giver what kind of pleasure, and in what measure any kind of it, he will permit. The plastic arts in particular, beyond the unfailing influence they exert on the character of a nation, are capable of an effect that demands the close supervision of the law. When beautiful men fashioned beautiful statues, these in their turn affected them, and the State had beautiful statues in part to thank for beautiful citizens. With us the tender, imaginative power of mothers appears to express itself only in monsters.

From this point of view I believe that in certain ancient legends, which men cast aside without hesitation as lies, something of truth may be recognised. The mothers of Aristomenes, of Aristodamas, of Alexander the Great, of Scipio, of Augustus, of Galerius, all dreamed in their pregnancy that they had to do with a serpent. The serpent was a symbol of deity, and the beautiful statues and pictures of a Bacchus, an Apollo, a Mercury and a Hercules were seldom without a serpent. The honest women had by day feasted their eyes on the god, and the bewildering dream called up the image of the reptile. Thus I save the dream, and surrender the interpretation which the pride of their sons and the shamelessness of flatterers gave it. For there must certainly be a reason why the adulterous phantasy was never anything but a serpent.

Here, however, I am going off the line. I merely wished to establish the fact that with the ancients beauty was the supreme law of the plastic arts. And this being established, it necessarily follows that all else after which also the plastic arts might strive,

if it were inconsistent with beauty must wholly yield to her, and if it were consistent with beauty must at least be subordinate.

I will dwell a little longer on *expression*. There are passions and degrees of passion which express themselves in the countenance by the most hideous grimaces, and put the whole frame into such violent postures that all the beautiful lines are lost which define it in a quieter condition. From these, therefore, the ancient artists either abstained wholly or reduced them to lower degrees in which they were capable of a measure of beauty. Rage and despair disfigured none of their works. I dare maintain that they never depicted a Fury.

Wrath they reduced to sternness: with the poet it was an angry Jupiter who sent forth his lightnings; with the artist the god was calmly grave.

Lamentation was toned down to sadness. And where this softening could not take place, where lamentation would have been just as deforming as belittling—what then did Timanthes? His picture of Iphigenia's sacrifice, in which he imparted to all the company the peculiar degree of sadness befitting them individually, but veiled the father's face, which should have shown the supreme degree, is well known, and many nice things have been said about it. He had, says one, so exhausted himself in sorrowful countenances that he despaired of being able to give the father one yet more grief-stricken. He confessed thereby, says another, that the pain of a father in such events is beyond all expression. I, for my part, see here neither the impotence of the artist nor the impotence of art. With the degree of emotion the traces of it are correspondingly heightened in the countenance; the highest degree is accompanied by the most decided traces of all, and nothing is easier for the artist than to exhibit them. But Timanthes knew the limits which the Graces set to his art. He knew that such misery as fell to Agamemnon's lot as a father expresses itself by distortions which are at all times ugly. So far as beauty and dignity could be united with the expression of sorrow, so far he carried it. He might have been willing to omit the ugliness had he been willing to mitigate the sorrow; but as his composition did not admit of both, what else remained to him but to veil it? What he dared not paint he left to be guessed. In a word, this veiling was a sacrifice which the artist offered to Beauty. It is an example, not how one should force expression beyond the bounds of art, but rather how one must subject it to the first law of art, the law of Beauty.

And if we now refer this to the Laocoön, the motive for which I am looking becomes evident. The master was striving after the highest beauty, under the given circumstances of bodily pain. This, in its full deforming violence, it was not possible to unite with that. He was obliged, therefore, to abate, to lower it, to tone down cries to sighing; not because cries betrayed an ignoble soul, but because they disfigure the face in an unpleasing manner. Let one only, in imagination, open wide the mouth in Laocoön, and judge! Let him shriek, and see! It was a form that inspired pity because it showed beauty and pain together; now it has become an ugly, a loathsome form, from which one gladly turns away one's face, because the aspect of pain excites discomfort without the beauty of the suffering subject changing this discomfort into the sweet feeling of compassion.

The mere wide opening of the mouth—apart from the fact that the other parts of the face are thereby violently and unpleasantly distorted—is a blot in painting and a fault in sculpture which has the most untoward effect possible. Montfaucon showed little taste when he passed off an old, bearded head with widespread mouth for an oracle-pronouncing Jupiter. Must a god shriek when he unveils the future? Would a pleasing contour of the mouth make his speech suspicious? I do not even believe Valerius, that Ajax in the imaginary picture of Timanthes should have cried aloud. Far inferior artists, in times when art was already degraded, never once allow the wildest barbarians, when, under the victor's sword, terror and mortal anguish seize them, to open the mouth to shrieking-point.

Certain it is that this reduction of extremest physical pain to a lower degree of feeling is apparent in several works of ancient art. The suffering Hercules in the poisoned garment, from the hand of an unknown ancient master, was not the Sophoclean who shrieked so horribly that the Locrian cliffs and the Euboean headlands resounded. It was more sad than wild. The Philoctetes of Pythagoras Leontinus appeared to impart his pain to the beholder, an effect which the slightest trace of the horrible would have prevented. Some may ask where I have learnt that this master made a statue of Philoctetes? From a passage of Pliny which ought not to have awaited my emendation, so manifestly forged or garbled is it.

III

But, as we have already seen, Art in these later days has been assigned far wider boundaries. Let her imitative hand, folks say, stretch out to the whole of visible Nature, of which the Beautiful is only a small part. Let fidelity and truth or expression be her first law, and as Nature herself at all times sacrifices beauty to higher purposes, so also must the artist subordinate it to his general aim and yield to it no further than fidelity of expression permits. Enough, if by truth and faithful expression an ugliness of Nature be transformed into a beauty of Art.

Granted that one would willingly, to begin with, leave these conceptions uncontested in their worth or worthlessness, ought not other considerations quite independent of them to be examined—namely, why the artist is obliged to set bounds to expression and never to choose for it the supreme moment of an action?

The fact that the material limits of Art confine her imitative effort to one single moment will, I believe, lead us to similar conclusions.

If the artist can never, in presence of ever-changing Nature, choose and use more than one single moment, and the painter in particular can use this single moment only from one point of vision, if, again, their works are made not merely to be seen, but to be considered, to be long and repeatedly contemplated, then it is certain that that single moment, and the single viewpoint of that moment, can never be chosen too significantly. Now that alone is significant and fruitful which gives free play to the imagination. The more we see, the more must we be able to add by thinking. The more we add thereto by thinking, so much the more can we believe ourselves to see. In the whole gamut of an emotion, however, there is no moment less advantageous than its topmost note. Beyond it there is nothing further, and to show us the uttermost is to tie the wings of fancy and oblige her, as she cannot rise above the sensuous impression, to busy herself with weaker pictures below it, the visible fullness of expression acting as a frontier which she dare not transgress. When, therefore, Laocoon sighs, the imagination can hear him shriek; but if he shrieks, then she cannot mount a step higher from this representation, nor, again, descend a step lower without seeing him in a more toler-

able and consequently more uninteresting condition. She hears him only groan, or she sees him already dead.

Further. As this single moment receives from Art an unchangeable continuance, it must not express anything which thought is obliged to consider transitory. All phenomena of whose very essence, according to our conceptions, it is that they break out suddenly and as suddenly vanish, that what they are they can be only for a moment—all such phenomena, whether agreeable or terrible, do, by the permanence which Art bestows, put on an aspect so abhorrent to Nature that at every repeated view of them the impression becomes weaker, until at last the whole thing inspires us with horror or loathing. La Mettrie, who had himself painted and engraved as a second Democritus, laughs only the first time that one sees him. View him often, and from a philosopher he becomes a fool, and the laugh becomes a grin. So, too, with cries. The violent pain which presses out the cry either speedily relaxes or it destroys the sufferer. If, again, the most patient and resolute man cries aloud, still he does not cry out without intermission. And just this unintermitting aspect in the material imitations of Art it is which would make his cries an effeminate or a childish weakness. This at least the artist of the Laocöon had to avoid, if cries had not been themselves damaging to beauty, and if even it had been permitted to his art to depict suffering without beauty.

Among the ancient painters Timomachus seems to have chosen by preference themes of the extremest emotion. His frenzied Ajax, his Medea the child-murderess, were famous pictures. But from the descriptions we have of them it clearly appears that he understood excellently well, and knew how to combine, that point where the beholder does not so much see the uttermost as reach it by added thought, and that appearance with which we do not join the idea of the transitory so necessarily that the prolongation of the same in Art must displease us. Medea he had not taken at the moment in which she actually murders the children, but some moments earlier, when motherly love still battles with jealousy. We foresee the end of the fight. We tremble beforehand, about to see Medea at her cruel deed, and our imagination goes out far beyond everything that the painter could show us in this terrible moment. But for this very reason we are so little troubled by the continued indecision of Medea, as Art presents it, that rather we devoutly wish it had so continued in Nature

itself, that the struggle of passions had never been decided, or had at least endured long enough for time and reflection to weaken rage and assure the victory to motherly feeling. To Timomachus, moreover, this wisdom of his brought great and manifold tributes, and raised him far above another unknown painter who had been misguided enough to represent Medea in the height of her rage, and thus to give to this transient extreme of frenzy a permanence that revolts all Nature. The poet who blames him on this account remarks, very sensibly, addressing the picture itself · “Dost thou, then, thirst perpetually for the blood of thy children? Is there constantly a new Jason, always a new Creusa here, to embitter thee for evermore? To the devil with thee, even in picture !” he adds, with angry disgust

Of the Frenzied Ajax of Timomachus we can judge by Philostratus' account Ajax appeared not as he rages amongst the herds and binds and slays oxen and goats for his enemies. Rather, the master showed him when, after these mad-heroic deeds, he sits exhausted and is meditating self-destruction. And that is actually the Frenzied Ajax ; not because just then he rages, but because one sees that he has raged, because one perceives the greatness of his frenzy most vividly by the despair and shame which he himself now feels over it. One sees the storm in the wreckage and corpses it has cast upon the shore.

17

Glancing at the reasons adduced why the artist of the Laocoön was obliged to observe restraint in the expression of physical pain, I find that they are entirely drawn from the peculiar nature of Art and its necessary limits and requirements. Hardly, therefore, could any one of them be made applicable to poetry.

Without inquiring here how far the poet can succeed in depicting physical beauty, so much at least is undeniable, that, as the whole immeasurable realm of perfection lies open to his imitative skill, this visible veil, under which perfection becomes beauty, can be only one of the smallest means by which he undertakes to interest us in his subject. Often he neglects this means entirely, being assured that if his hero has won our goodwill, then his nobler qualities either so engage us that we do not think at all of the bodily form, or, if we think of it, so prepossess us that we do, on their very account, attribute to him,

if not a beautiful one, yet at any rate one that is not uncomely. At least, with every single line which is not expressly intended for the eye he will still take this sense into consideration. When Virgil's Laocoon cries aloud, to whom does it occur then that a wide mouth is needful for a cry, and that this must be ugly? Enough, that *clamores horrendos ad sidera tollit* is an excellent feature for the hearing, whatever it might be for the vision. Whosoever demands here a beautiful picture, for him the poet has entirely failed of his intention.

In the next place, nothing requires the poet to concentrate his picture on one single moment. He takes up each of his actions, as he likes, from its very origin and conducts it through all possible modifications to its final close. Every one of these modifications, which would cost the artist an entire separate canvas or marble-block, costs the poet a single line; and if this line, taken in itself, would have misled the hearer's imagination, it was either so prepared for by what preceded, or so modified and supplemented by what followed, that it loses its separate impression, and in its proper connection produces the most admirable effect in the world. Were it therefore actually unbecoming to a man to cry out in the extremity of pain, what damage can this trifling and transient impropriety do in our eyes to one whose other virtues have already taken us captive? Virgil's Laocoon shrieks aloud, but this shrieking Laocoon we already know and love as the wisest of patriots and the most affectionate of fathers. We refer his cries not to his character but purely to his unendurable suffering. It is this alone we hear in his cries, and the poet could make it sensible to us only through them. Who shall blame him then, and not much rather confess that, if the artist does well not to permit Laocoon to cry aloud, the poet does equally well in permitting him?

But Virgil here is merely a narrative poet. Can the dramatic poet be included with him in this justification? It is a different impression which is made by the narration of any man's cries from that which is made by the cries themselves. The drama, which is intended for the living artistry of the actor, might on this very ground be held more strictly to the laws of material painting. In him we do not merely suppose that we see and hear a shrieking Philoctetes; we hear and see him actually shriek. The closer the actor comes to Nature in this, the more sensibly must our eyes and ears be offended, for it is undeniable that they are so in Nature when we hear such loud and violent utterances of pain. Besides, physical pain does not generally

excite that degree of sympathy which other evils awaken. Our imagination is not able to distinguish enough in it for the mere sight of it to call out something like an equivalent feeling in ourselves. Sophocles could, therefore, easily have overstepped a propriety not merely capricious, but founded in the very essence of our feelings, if he allowed Philoctetes and Hercules thus to whine and weep, thus to shriek and bellow. The bystanders could not possibly take so much share in their suffering as these unmeasured outbursts seem to demand. They will appear to us spectators comparatively cold, and yet we cannot well regard their sympathy otherwise than as the measure of our own. Let us add that the actor can only with difficulty, if at all, carry the representation of physical pain to the point of illusion, and who knows whether the later dramatic poets are not rather to be commended than to be blamed, in that they have either avoided this rock entirely or only sailed round it with the lightest of skiffs?

How many a thing would appear irrefragable in theory if genius had not succeeded in proving the contrary by actual achievement! None of these considerations is unfounded, and yet Philoctetes remains one of the masterpieces of the stage. For some of them do not really touch Sophocles, and by treating the rest with contempt he has attained beauties of which the timid critic without this example would never dream. The following notes deal with this point in fuller detail.

1. How wonderfully has the poet known how to strengthen and enlarge the idea of the physical pain! He chose a wound—for even the circumstances of the story one can contemplate as if they had depended on choice, in so far, that is to say, as he chose the whole story just because of the advantages the circumstances of it afforded him—he chose, I say, a wound and not an inward malady, because a more vivid representation can be made of the former than of the latter, however painful this may be. The mysterious inward burning which consumed Meleager when his mother sacrificed him in mortal fire to her sisterly rage would therefore be less theatrical than a wound. And this wound was a divine judgment. A supernatural venom raged within without ceasing, and only an unusually severe attack of pain had its set time, after which the unhappy man fell ever into a narcotic sleep in which his exhausted nature must recover itself to be able to enter anew on the selfsame way of suffering. Chateaubrun represents him merely as wounded

by the poisoned arrow of a Trojan. What of extraordinary can so commonplace an accident promise? To such every warrior in the ancient battles was exposed, how did it come about that only with Philoctetes had it such terrible consequences? A natural poison that works nine whole years without killing is, besides, more improbable by far than all the mythical miraculous with which the Greek has furnished it.

2. But however great and terrible he made the bodily pains of his hero, he yet was in no doubt that they were insufficient in themselves to excite any notable degree of sympathy. He combined them, therefore, with other evils, which likewise, regarded in themselves, could not particularly move us, but which by this combination received just as melancholy a tinge as in their turn they imparted to the bodily pains. These evils were—a total deprivation of human society, hunger, and all the inconveniences of life to which in such deprivations one is exposed under an inclement sky. Let us conceive of a man in these circumstances, but give him health, and capacities, and industry, and we have a Robinson Crusoe who makes little demand upon our compassion, although otherwise his fate is not exactly a matter of indifference. For we are rarely so satisfied with human society that the repose which we enjoy when wanting it might not appear very charming, particularly under the representation which flatters every individual, that he can learn gradually to dispense with outside assistance. On the other hand, give a man the most painful, incurable malady, but at the same time conceive him surrounded by agreeable friends who let him want for nothing, who soften his affliction as far as lies in their power, and to whom he may unreservedly wail and lament; unquestionably we shall have pity for him, but this pity does not last, in the end we shrug our shoulders and recommend him patience. Only when both cases come together, when the lonely man has an enfeebled body, when others help the sick man just as little as he can help himself, and his complainings fly away in the desert air; then, indeed, we behold all the misery that can afflict human nature close over the unfortunate one, and every fleeting thought in which we conceive ourselves in his place awakens shuddering and horror. We perceive nothing before us but despair in its most dreadful form, and no pity is stronger, none more melts the whole soul than that which is mingled with representations of despair. Of this kind is the pity which we feel for Philoctetes, and feel most strongly at that moment when we see him deprived

of his bow, the one thing that might preserve him his wretched life. Oh, the Frenchman, who had neither the understanding to reflect on this nor the heart to feel it ! Or, if he had, was small enough to sacrifice all this to the pitiful taste of his countrymen. Chateaubrun gives Philoctetes society. He lets a young Princess come to him in the desert island. Nor is she alone, for she has her governess with her ; a thing of which I know not whether the Princess or the poet had the greater need. The whole excellent play with the bow he set quite aside. Instead of it he gives us the play of beautiful eyes. Certainly to young French heroes bow and arrow would have appeared a great joke. On the other hand, nothing is more serious than the anger of beautiful eyes. The Greek torments us with the dreadful apprehension that poor Philoctetes must remain on the desert island without his bow, and perish miserably. The Frenchman knows a surer way to our hearts : he makes us fear the son of Achilles must retire without his Princess. At the time the Parisian critics proclaimed this a triumphing over the ancients, and one of them proposed to call Chateaubrun's piece "*La Difficulté vaincue*."

3. After the general effect let us consider the individual scenes, in which Philoctetes is no longer the forsaken invalid ; in which he has hope of speedily leaving the comfortless wilderness behind and of once more reaching his own kingdom ; in which, therefore, the painful wound is his sole calamity. He whimpers, he cries aloud, he goes through the most frightful convulsions. To this behaviour it is that the reproach of offended propriety is particularly addressed. It is an Englishman who utters this reproach ; a man, therefore, whom we should not easily suspect of a false delicacy. As we have already hinted, he gives a very good reason for the reproach. All feelings and passions, he says, with which others can only slightly sympathise, are offensive when they are expressed too violently. "For this reason there is nothing more unbecoming and more unworthy of a man than when he cannot bear pain, even the most violent, with patience, but weeps and cries aloud. Of course we may feel sympathy with bodily pain. When we see that any one is about to get a blow on the arm or the shin-bone, and when the blow actually falls, in a certain measure we feel it as truly as he whom it strikes. At the same time, however, it is certain that the trouble we thus experience amounts to very little ; if the person struck, therefore, sets up a violent outcry, we do not fail to despise him, because we are

not at all in the mind to cry out with so much violence." (Adam Smith, *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*, Part I, sect. 2, chap. 1, p. 41, London, 1761.) Nothing is more fallacious than general laws for human feelings. The web of them is so fine-spun and so intricate that it is hardly possible for the most careful speculation to take up a single thread by itself and follow it through all the threads that cross it. And supposing it possible, what is the use of it? There does not exist in Nature a single unmixed feeling; along with every one of them there arise a thousand others simultaneously, the very smallest of which completely alters the first, so that exceptions on exceptions spring up which reduce at last the supposed general law itself to the mere experience of a few individual cases. We despise him, says the Englishman, whom we hear shriek aloud under bodily pain. No, not always, nor at first; not when we see that the sufferer makes every effort to suppress it; not when we know him otherwise as a man of fortitude; still less when we see him even in his suffering give proof of his fortitude, when we see that the pain can indeed force cries from him, but can compel him to nothing further—that he will rather submit to the longer endurance of this pain than change his opinions or his resolves in the slightest, even if he might hope by such a change to end his agony. And all this we find in Philoctetes. With the ancient Greeks moral greatness consisted in just as unchanging a love to friends as an unalterable hatred to enemies. This greatness Philoctetes maintains in all his torments. His pain has not so dried his eyes that they can spare no tears for the fate of his old friends. His pain has not made him so pliable that, to be rid of it, he will forgive his enemies and allow himself willingly to be used for their selfish purposes. And this rock of a man ought the Athenians to have despised because the surges that could not shake him made him give forth a cry? I confess that in the philosophy of Cicero, generally speaking, I find little taste; and least of all in that second book of his *Tusculan Disputations*, where he pours out his notions about the endurance of bodily pain. One might almost think he wanted to train a gladiator, he declaims so passionately against the outward expression of pain. In this alone does he seem to find a want of fortitude, without considering that it is frequently anything but voluntary, whilst true bravery can only be shown in voluntary actions. In Sophocles he hears Philoctetes merely complain and cry aloud, and overlooks utterly his otherwise steadfast bearing. Where ~~saye~~ here could

he have found the opportunity for his rhetorical outburst against the poets? "They would make us weaklings, showing us as they do the bravest of men lamenting and bewailing themselves." They must bewail themselves, for a theatre is not an arena. The condemned or venal gladiator it behoved to do and suffer everything with decorum. No complaining word must be heard from him, nor painful grimace be seen. For as his wounds and his death were to delight the spectators, Art must learn to conceal all feeling. The least utterance of it would have aroused compassion, and compassion often excited would have speedily brought an end to these icily gruesome spectacles. But what here it was not desired to excite is the one object of the tragic stage, and demands therefore an exactly opposite demeanour. Its heroes must show feeling, must utter their pain, and let Nature work in them undisguisedly. If they betray restraint and training, they leave our hearts cold, and pugilists in the cothurnus could at best only excite astonishment. This designation would befit all the persons of the so-called Seneca tragedies, and I firmly believe that the gladiatorial plays were the principal reason why the Romans in tragedy remained so far below the mediocre. To disown human nature was the lesson the spectators learned in the bloody amphitheatre, where certainly a Ctesias might study his art, but never a Sophocles. The tragic genius, accustomed to these artistic death scenes, necessarily sank into bombast and rodomontade. But just as little as such rodomontade could inspire true heroism, could the laments of Philoctetes make men weak. The complaints are those of a man, but the actions those of a hero. Both together make the human hero, who is neither soft nor hardened, but appears now the one and now the other, according as Nature at one time, and duty and principle at another, demand. He is the highest that Wisdom can produce and Art imitate.

4. It is not enough that Sophocles has secured his sensitive Philoctetes against contempt; he has also wisely taken precautions against all else that might, according to the Englishman's remark, be urged against him. For if we certainly do not always despise him who cries aloud in bodily pain, still it is indisputable that we do not feel so much sympathy for him as these outcries seem to demand. How, then, shall all those comport themselves who have to do with the shrieking Philoctetes? Shall they affect to be deeply moved? That is against nature. Shall they show themselves as cold and as

disconcerted as we are really accustomed to be in such cases? That would produce for the spectator the most unpleasant dissonance. But, as we have said, against this Sophocles has taken precautions. In this way, namely, that the secondary persons have an interest of their own; that the impression which the cries of Philoctetes make on them is not the one thing that occupies them, and the spectator's attention is not so much drawn to the disproportion of their sympathy with these cries, but rather to the change which arises or should arise in their disposition and attitude from sympathy, be it as weak or as strong as it may. Neoptolemus and his company have deceived the unhappy Philoctetes; they recognise into what despair their betrayal will plunge him; and now, before their eyes, a terrible accident befalls him. If this accident is not enough to arouse any particular feeling of sympathy within them, it still will move them to repent, to have regard to a misery so great, and indispose them to add to it by treachery. This is what the spectator expects, and his expectations are not disappointed by the noble-minded Neoptolemus. Philoctetes mastering his pain would have maintained Neoptolemus in his dissimulation. Philoctetes, whom his pain renders incapable of dissimulation, however imperatively necessary it may seem to him, so that his future fellow-travellers may not too soon regret their promise to take him with them; Philoctetes, who is nature itself, brings Neoptolemus, too, back to his own nature. This conversion is admirable, and so much the more touching as it is entirely wrought by humane feeling. With the Frenchman, on the contrary, beautiful eyes have their share in it. But I will say no more of this burlesque. Of the same artifice—namely, to join to the pity which bodily pain should arouse another emotion in the onlookers—Sophocles availed himself on another occasion: in the *Trachiniae*. The agony of Hercules is no enfeebling agony, it drives him to frenzy in which he pants for nothing but revenge. He had already, in his rage, seized Lichas and dashed him to pieces upon the rocks. The chorus is of women; so much the more naturally must fear and horror overwhelm them. This, and the expectant doubt whether yet a god will hasten to the help of Hercules, or Hercules succumb to the calamity, form here the real general interest, mingled merely with a slight tinge of sympathy. As soon as the issue is determined by the oracle, Hercules becomes quiet, and admiration of his final steadfast resolution takes the place of all other feelings. But in com-

paring the suffering Hercules with the suffering Philoctetes, one must never forget that the former is a demigod and the latter only a man. The man is not for a moment ashamed of his lamentations; but the demigod is ashamed that his mortal part has prevailed so far over the immortal that he must weep and whimper like a girl. We moderns do not believe in demigods, but our smallest hero we expect to feel and act as a demigod.

Whether an actor can bring the cries and grimaces of pain to the point of illusion I will not venture either to assert or to deny. If I found that our actors could not, then I should first like to know whether it would be impossible also to a Garrick, and if even he did not succeed, I should still be able to suppose a perfection in the stage-business and declamation of the ancients of which we to-day have no conception.

V

There are some learned students of antiquity who regard the Laocoon group as indeed a work of Greek masters, but of the time of the Emperors, because they believe that the Laocoon of Virgil served as its model. Of the older scholars who are of this opinion I will name only Bartholomew Marliani, and of the modern, Montfaucon. They doubtless found so close an agreement between the work of art and the poet's description that they thought it impossible that the two should have lighted by chance upon identical details such as are far from offering themselves unsought. At the same time their presumption is that if it be a question of the honour of the invention and first conception, the probability is incomparably greater that it belongs rather to the poet than to the artist.

Only they appear to have forgotten that a third case is possible. For it may be that the poet has as little imitated the artist as the artist has the poet, and that both have drawn from an identical source older than either. According to Macrobius, this more ancient source might have been Pisander. For when the works of this Greek poet were still extant, it was a matter of common knowledge, *pueris decantatum*, that the Roman had not so much imitated as faithfully translated from him the whole of the Capture and Destruction of Ilium, his entire Second Book. Now, therefore, if Pisander had been Virgil's predecessor also in the story of Laocoon, then the

Greek artists needed not to learn their lesson from a Latin poet, and the surmise as to their era is based upon nothing.

All the same, were I obliged to maintain the opinion of Marham and Montfaucon, I should suggest to them the following way out. Pisander's poems are lost; how the story of Laocoon was told by him no one can say with certainty; but it is probable that it was with the same details of which we still find traces in the Greek writers. Now, these do not agree in the least with Virgil's narrative, and the Roman poet must have recast the Greek legend as he thought best. His manner of telling the tale of Laocoon is his own invention, consequently, if the artists in their representation are in harmony with him, it is almost a certainty that they followed him and wrought according to his pattern.

In Quintus Calaber, indeed, Laocoon displays a similar suspicion of the Wooden Horse as in Virgil, but the wrath of Minerva which he thereby draws upon himself expresses itself quite differently. The earth trembles under the warning Trojan, horror and dread seize him; a burning pain rages in his eyes; his brain reels; he raves; he goes blind. Only when, though blind, he ceases not to urge the burning of the Wooden Horse, does Minerva send two terrible dragons, and these attack only the children of Laocoon. In vain they stretch out their hands to their father; the poor blind man cannot help them, they are torn in pieces, and the serpent glides away into the earth. To Laocoon himself they do nothing, and that this account was not peculiar to Quintus, but must rather have been universally accepted, is proved by a passage in Lycophron, where these serpents bear the epithet "child-eaters."

If, however, this account had been universally received amongst the Greeks, the Greek artists in that case would hardly have been bold enough to deviate from it, and it would hardly have happened that they should deviate from it in precisely the same way as a Roman poet did if they had not known this poet, if perhaps they had not actually had the express commission to follow his lead. On this point, I think, we must insist if we would defend Marham and Montfaucon. Virgil is the first and only one who describes the father as well as the children destroyed by the serpents; the sculptors do this likewise, while yet as Greeks they ought not therefore it is probable that they did it at the prompting of Virgil.

I quite understand how far this probability falls short of

historical certainty. But as I do not intend to draw any historical conclusions from it, I yet believe at least that it can stand as a hypothesis which the critic in forming his views may take into account. Proven or not proven, that the sculptors followed Virgil in their works, I will assume it merely to see how in that case they did follow him. Concerning the outcries, I have already explained my opinion. Perhaps a further comparison may lead us to observations not less instructive.

The idea of binding the father with his two sons into one group by the deadly serpents is unquestionably a very happy one, evincing an uncommonly graphic fancy. To whom is it to be assigned? The poet, or the artist? Montfaucon refuses to find it in the poet. But Montfaucon, as I think, has not read him with sufficient attention.

. . . *Ilh agmine certo*
Laocoonta petunt, et primum parva duorum
Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
Implicat et miseros morsu depascitur artus
Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem,
Corrumpunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus. . . .

The poet has depicted the serpents as of a marvellous length. They have enfolded the boys, and when the father comes to their aid, seize him also (*corrumpunt*). From their size they could not at once uncoil themselves from the boys; there must therefore be a moment in which they had attacked the father with their heads and foreparts, while they still with their other parts enveloped the children. This moment is required in the development of the poetic picture, the poet makes it sufficiently felt; only the time had not yet been reached for finishing the picture. That the ancient commentators actually realised this appears to be shown by a passage in Dentatus. How much less would it escape the artists in whose understanding eyes everything that can advantage them stands out so quickly and so plainly.

In the coils themselves with which the poet's fancy sees the serpents entwine Laocoon, he very carefully avoids the arms, in order to leave the hands their freedom.

Ille simul manibus tendit disvellere nodos.

In this the artists must necessarily follow him. Nothing gives more life and expression than the movement of the hands; in emotion especially the most speaking countenance without

it is insignificant. Arms fast bound to the body by the coils of the serpents would have spread frost and death over the whole group. For this reason we see them, in the chief figure as well as in the secondary figures, in full activity, and busiest there where for the moment there is the most violent anguish.

Further, too, the artists, in view of the convolutions of the serpents, found nothing that could be more advantageously borrowed from the poet than this movement of the arms. Virgil makes the serpents wind themselves doubly about the body and doubly about the neck of Laocoon, with their heads elevated above him.

*Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.*

This picture satisfies the imagination completely; the noblest parts are compressed to suffocation, and the poison goes straight to the face. Nevertheless, it was not a picture for artists, who want to exhibit the effects of the pain and the poison in the bodily frame. For in order to make these visible the chief parts must be as free as possible, and no external pressure whatever must be exercised upon them which could alter and weaken the play of the suffering nerves and straining muscles. The double coil of the serpents would have concealed the whole body, so that the painful contraction of the abdomen, which is so expressive, would have remained invisible. What one would still have perceived of the body, over, or under, or between the coils would have appeared under pressures and swellings caused not by the inward pain, but by the external burden. The neck so many times encircled would have spoiled completely the pyramidal tapering of the group which is so agreeable to the eye; and the pointed serpent heads standing out into the air from this swollen bulk would have made so abrupt a break in proportion that the form of the whole would have been repulsive in the extreme. There are doubtless draughtsmen who would nevertheless have been unintelligent enough to follow the poet slavishly. But what would have come of that, we can, to name no other instances, understand from a drawing of Francis Cleyn, which can be looked on only with disgust. (This occurs in the splendid edition of Dryden's English Virgil.) The ancient sculptors perceived at a glance that their art demanded an entire modification. They removed all the serpent coils from neck and body to thighs and feet. Here these coils, without injuring the expression, could cover

and press as much as was needful. Here they aroused at once the idea of retarded flight and of a kind of immobility which is exceedingly advantageous to the artistic permanence of a single posture

I know not how it has come about that the critics have passed over in perfect silence this distinction, which is exhibited so plainly in the coilings of the serpents, between the work of art and the poet's description. It exalts the artistic wisdom of the work just as much as the other which they mention, which, however, they do not venture to praise, but rather seek to excuse. I mean the difference in the draping of the subject. Virgil's Laocoon is in his priestly vestments, but in the group appears, with both his sons, completely naked. I am told there are people who find something preposterous in representing a prince, a priest, unclothed, at the altar of sacrifice. And to these people connoisseurs of art reply, in all seriousness, that certainly it is an offence against custom, but that the artists were compelled to it, because they could not give their figures any suitable attire. Sculpture, say they, cannot imitate any kind of cloth; thick folds would make a bad effect. Of two embarrassments, therefore, they had chosen the smaller, and were willing rather to offend against truth than to incur the risk of blame for their draperies. If the ancient artists would laugh at the objection, I really cannot tell what they would have said about the answer. One cannot degrade Art further than by such a defence. For, granted that sculpture could imitate the different materials just as well as painting, should then Laocoon necessarily have been clothed? Should we lose nothing by this draping? Has a costume, the work of slavish hands, just as much beauty as the work of the Eternal Wisdom, an organised body? Does it demand the same faculties, is it equally meritorious, does it bring the same honour, to imitate the former as to imitate the latter? Do our eyes only wish to be deceived, and is it all the same to them with what they are deceived?

With the poet a dress is no dress; it conceals nothing; our imagination sees through it at all times. Let Laocoon in Virgil have it or lack it, his suffering in every part of his body is, to the imagination, an evil equally visible. The brow is bound about for her with the priestly fillet, but it is not veiled. Indeed, it does not only not hinder, this fillet, it even strengthens yet more the conception that we form of the sufferer's misfortunes.

Perfusus sanguine vitæ atroxque veneno.

His priestly dignity helps him not a whit; the very symbol which secures him everywhere respect and veneration is soaked and defiled by the deadly venom.

But this accessory idea the artist had to sacrifice if the main work were not to suffer damage. Besides, had he left to Laocoon only this fillet, the expression would in consequence have been much weakened. The brow would have been partly covered, and the brow is the seat of expression. So, just as in that other particular, the shriek, he sacrificed expression to beauty, in the same way here he sacrificed custom to expression. Generally speaking, custom, in the view of the ancients, was a matter of little consequence. They felt that the highest aim of Art pointed to dispensing with the customary altogether. Beauty is this highest aim; necessity invented clothing, and what has Art to do with necessity? I grant you there is also a beauty of drapery; but what is it compared with the beauty of the human form? And will he who is able to reach the higher content himself with the lower? I am much afraid that the most finished master in draperies shows by that very dexterity in what it is he is lacking.

VI

My hypothesis—that the artists imitated the poet—does not redound to their disparagement. On the contrary, this imitation sets their wisdom in the fairest light. They followed the poet without allowing themselves to be misled by him in the slightest. They had a pattern, but as they had to transpose this pattern from one art into another, they found opportunity enough to think for themselves. And these thoughts of theirs, which are manifest in their deviation from their model, prove that they were just as great in their art as he in his own.

And now I will reverse the hypothesis and suppose the poet to have imitated the artists. There are scholars who maintain this supposition to be the truth. Whether they had historical grounds for that, I do not know. But when they found the work of art so superlatively beautiful, they could not persuade themselves that it might belong to a late period. It must be of the age when Art was in its perfect flower, because it deserved to be of that age.

It has been shown that, admirable as Virgil's picture is, there are yet various features of it which the artists could not use. The statement thus admits of being reduced to this, that

a good poetic description must also yield a good actual painting, and that the poet has only so far described well when the artist can follow him in every feature. One is inclined to presume this restricted sense, even before seeing it confirmed by examples; merely from consideration of the wider sphere of poetry, from the boundless field of our imagination, and from the spiritual nature of the pictures, which can stand side by side in the greatest multitude and variety without one obscuring or damaging another, just as the things themselves would do or the natural signs of the same within the narrow bounds of space and time.

But if the less cannot include the greater, the greater can contain the less. This is my point—if not, every feature which the descriptive poet uses can be used with like effect on the canvas or in the marble. Might perhaps every feature of which the artist avails himself prove equally effective in the work of the poet? Unquestionably; for what we find beautiful in a work of art is not found beautiful by the eye, but by our imagination through the eye. The picture in question may therefore be called up again in our imagination by arbitrary or natural signs, and thus also may arise at any time the corresponding pleasure, although not in corresponding degree.

This, however, being admitted, I must confess that to my mind the hypothesis that Virgil imitated the artists is far less conceivable than the contrary supposition. If the artists followed the poet, I can account for their deviations. They were obliged to deviate, because the selfsame features as the poet delineated would have occasioned them difficulties such as do not embarrass the poet. But what should make the poet deviate? If he had followed the group in every detail would he not, all the same, have presented to us an admirable picture? I can conceive quite well how his fancy, working on its own account, might suggest one feature and another; but the reasons why his imagination should think that beautiful features, already before his eyes, ought to be transformed into those other features—such reasons, I confess, never dawn upon me.

It even seems to me that if Virgil had had the group as his pattern he could scarcely have refrained from permitting the union together, as it were in a knot, of the three bodies to be at least conjectured. It was too vivid not to catch his eye, and he would have appreciated its excellent effect too keenly not to give it yet more prominence in his description. As I have said, the time was not yet arrived to finish this picture

of the entwined group. No; but a single word more would perhaps have given to it, in the shadow where the poet had to leave it, a very obvious impression. What the artist was able to discover without this word, the poet, if he had seen it in the artist's work, would not have left unspoken.

The artist had the most compelling reasons not to let the suffering of Laocoon break out into a cry. But if the poet had had before him the so touching union of pain and beauty in the work of art, what could have so imperatively obliged him to leave completely unsuggested the idea of manly dignity and great-hearted endurance which arises from this union of pain and beauty, and all at once to shock us with the terrible outcries of Laocoon? Richardson says, "Virgil's Laocoon must shriek, because the poet desires to arouse not so much pity for him as terror and horror in the ranks of the Trojans." I grant, although Richardson seems not to have considered it, that the poet does not make the description in his own person, but lets Æneas make it, and this, too, in the presence of Dido, to whose compassion Æneas could never enough appeal. It is not, however, the shriek that surprises me, but the absence of any gradation leading up to the cry, a gradation that the work of art would naturally have shown the poet to be needful, if, as we have supposed, he had had it for a pattern. Richardson adds, "The story of Laocoon should lead up merely to the pathetic description of the final ruin, the poet, therefore, has not thought fit to make it more interesting, in order not to waste upon the misfortune of a single citizen the attention which should be wholly fixed on Troy's last dreadful night." Only, this sets out the affair as one to be regarded from a painter's point of view, from which it cannot be contemplated at all. The calamity of Laocoon and the Destruction of the City are not with the poet pictures set side by side; the two together do not make a great whole which the eye either should or could take in at a glance; and only in such a case would it be needful to arrange that our eyes should fall rather upon Laocoon than upon the burning city. The two descriptions follow each other successively, and I do not see what disadvantage it could bring to the second, how greatly soever the preceding one had moved us. That could only be, if the second in itself were not sufficiently touching.

Still less reason would the poet have had to alter the coiling of the serpents. In the work of art they leave the hands busy and bind the feet. This disposition pleases the eye, and it is

a living picture that is left by it in the imagination. It is so clear and pure that it can be presented almost as effectively by words as by actual material means.

. . . *Micat alter, et ipsum
Laocoönia petit, totumque infraque supraque
Implicat et rabido tandem fert illa morsu*

*At serpens lapsu crebro redeunte subintrat
Lubricus, intortoque ligat genua infima nodo.*

These are the lines of Sadolet, which would, no doubt, have come from Virgil with a more picturesque power if a visible pattern had fired his fancy, and which would in that case certainly have been better than what he now gives us in their place :—

*Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.*

These details, certainly, fill the imagination, but she must not rest in them, she must not endeavour to make an end here; she must see now only the serpents and now only Laocoon, she must try to represent to herself what kind of figure is made by the two together. As soon as she sinks to this the Virgilian picture begins to dissatisfy, and she finds it in the highest degree unpictorial.

If, however, the changes which Virgil had made in the pattern set before him had not been unsuccessful, they would yet be merely arbitrary. One imitates in order to resemble. Can resemblance be preserved when alterations are made needlessly? Rather, when this is done, the design obviously is—not to be like, and therefore not to imitate.

Not the whole, some may object, but perhaps this part and that. Good! But what, then, are these single parts that agree in the description and in the work of art so exactly that the poet might seem to have borrowed them from the latter? The father, the children, the serpents—all these the story furnished to the poet as well as to the artists. Excepting the story itself, they agree in nothing beyond the one point that they bind father and children in a single serpent-knot. But the suggestion of this arose from the altered detail, that the selfsame calamity overtook the father and the children. This alteration, as has already been pointed out, Virgil appears to have introduced; for the Greek legend says something quite different. Consequently, when, in view of that common bind-

ing by the serpent coils, there certainly was imitation on one side or the other, it is easier to suppose it on the artist's side than on that of the poet. In all else the one deviates from the other; only with the distinction that, if it is the artist who has made these deviations, the design of imitating the poet can still persist, the aim and the limitations of his art obliging him thereto; if, on the other hand, it is the poet who is supposed to have imitated the artist, then all the deviations referred to are an evidence against the supposed imitation, and those who, notwithstanding, maintain it, can mean nothing further by it than that the work of art is older than the poetic description.

VII

When one says that the artist imitates the poet, or that the poet imitates the artist, this is capable of two interpretations. Either the one makes the work of the other the actual subject of his imitation, or they have both the same subject and the one borrows from the other the style and fashion of the imitation. When Virgil describes the shield of Æneas, it is in the first of these senses that he imitates the artist who made it. The work of art itself, not that which is represented upon it, is the subject of his imitation, and although certainly he describes at the same time what one sees represented thereon, yet he describes it only as a part of the shield, and not the thing itself. If Virgil, on the other hand, had imitated the Laocoon group, this would be an imitation of the second kind. For he would not have imitated the group, but what the group represents, and only the characteristics of his imitation would have been borrowed from it. In the first imitation the poet is original, in the second he is a copyist. The former is a part of the general imitation which constitutes the essence of his art, and he works as genius, whether his subject be a work of other arts or of Nature. The latter, on the contrary, degrades him wholly from his dignity; instead of the things themselves, he imitates the imitations of them, and gives us cold recollections of features from another's genius in place of original features of his own.

When, however, poet and artist, as not seldom happens, view the subjects that they have in common from an identical standpoint, it can hardly fail that there should be agreement in many particulars without implying the slightest degree of imitation or common aim between them. These agreements

in contemporaneous artists and poets, concerning things that are no longer extant, may contribute to reciprocal illustration; but to attempt to establish such illustration by finding design in what was mere accident, and especially to attribute to the poet in every trifle a reference to this statue or that painting, is to render him a very equivocal service. And not to him alone, but to the reader also, for whom the most beautiful passage is thereby made, if God will, very intelligible, but at the same time admirably frigid.

This is the purpose, and the error, of a famous English work. Spence wrote his *Polymetus* with much classical erudition and a very intimate acquaintance with the surviving works of ancient art. His design of explaining by these the Roman poets, and, on the other hand, of deriving from the poets elucidations for ancient works of art hitherto unexplained, he often accomplished very happily. But nevertheless I contend that his book is altogether intolerable to any reader of taste.

It is natural that, when Valerius Flaccus describes the Winged Lightning upon the Roman shields—

*Nec primus radios, miles Romane, corusca
Fulminis et rutilas scutis diffuderis alas,*

this description becomes to me far clearer when I perceive the representation of such a shield upon an ancient monument. It may be that Mars, hovering exactly as Addison fancied he saw him hovering, over the head of Rhea upon a coin, was also represented by the ancient armourers on shields and helmets, and that Juvenal had such a shield or helmet in mind when he alluded to it in a single word which, until Addison, remained a riddle for all the commentators. For my part, I think that the passage of Ovid where the exhausted Cephalus calls to the cooling breezes :

*Aura . . . venas. . . .
Meque juves, intresque sinus, gratissima, nostros !*

and his Procris takes this Aura for the name of a rival—that to me, I say, this passage appears more natural when I gather from the works of ancient artists that they actually personified the soft breezes and worshipped a kind of female sylphs under the name of *Aurae*. I grant you, that when Juvenal styles a distinguished good-for-nothing a *Hermes*-statue, one could hardly find the likeness in the comparison without seeing such a statue, without knowing that it is a miserable pillar, which

bears merely the head, or at most the torso, of the god, and, because we perceive thereon neither hands nor feet, awakens the conception of slothfulness. Illustrations of this sort are not to be despised, although, in fact, they are neither always necessary nor always adequate. The poet had the work of art in view as a thing existing for itself, and not as an imitation; or with both artist and poet certain conceptions of an identical kind were taken for granted, in consequence of which a further agreement in their representations must appear, from which, again, we can reason back to the generally accepted nature of these conceptions.

But when Tibullus describes the form of Apollo, as he appeared to him in a dream—the most beautiful of youths, his temples bound about with the modest laurel; Syrian odours exhaling from the golden hair that flows about his neck; a gleaming white and rosy red mingled on the whole body, as on the tender cheek of the bride as she is led to her beloved—why must these features be borrowed from famous old pictures? Echion's *nova nupta verecundia notabilis* may have been seen in Rome, may have been copied a thousand times. Had then the bridal blush itself vanished from the world? Since the painter had seen it, was it no larger to be seen by a poet save in the painter's imitation? Or if another poet speaks of the exhausted Vulcan, or calls his face heated before the forge a red and fiery countenance, must he needs learn first from the work of a painter that labour wearies and heat reddens? Or when Lucretius describes the changes of the seasons and causes them to pass before us in their natural order with the entire succession of their effects in earth and sky, was Lucretius an ephemeron? Had he not lived through a whole year himself to witness all these transformations, but must depict them after a procession in which their statues were carried around? Must he first learn from these statues the old poetic artifice whereby abstract notions are turned into actual beings? Or Virgil's *pontem indignatus Araxes*, that splendid poetic picture of a stream overflowing its banks and tearing down the bridge thrown over it, does it not lose all its beauty if the poet is there alluding merely to a work of art in which this river-god is represented as actually breaking down a bridge? What do we want with these commentaries which in the clearest passages supplant the poet in order to let the suggestion of an artist glimmer through?

I lament that so useful a look as *Polymets* might otherwise have been had, by reason of this tasteless crotchet of foisting

upon the ancient poets in place of their own proper fancy an acquaintance with another's, been made so offensive and so much more damaging to the classic authors than the watery expositions of the shallowest philologist could ever have been. I regret yet more that in this matter Spence should have been preceded by Addison himself, who, from a passionate desire to exalt the works of ancient art into a means of interpretation, has just as little distinguished between the cases in which it is becoming in a poet to imitate the artist and those in which it is disparaging.

VIII

Of the likeness which poetry and painting bear to each other Spence has the most singular conceptions possible. He believes the two arts in ancient times to have been so closely united that they always went hand in hand, that the poet constantly kept the painter in view, and the painter the poet. That poetry is the more comprehensive art, that beauties are at her command which painting can never attain, that she may frequently have reason to prefer unpicturesque beauties to picturesque—of this he does not appear to have a notion, and therefore the smallest difference which he detects between poets and artists of the old world puts him in a difficulty, and he resorts to the most extraordinary subterfuges to escape from his embarrassment.

The ancient poets generally endow Bacchus with horns. It is quite wonderful, then, says Spence, that we find these horns so seldom on his statues. He lights on this explanation and on that: on the uncertainty of the antiquaries, on the smallness of the horns themselves, which might have crept into concealment under the grapes and ivy-leaves, the unfailing head-covering of the god. He winds about and about the true reason without ever suspecting it. The horns of Bacchus were not natural horns, such as we see on the fauns and satyrs. They were but a garnishment of the brow, which he could assume and lay aside at will.

*Tibi, cum sine cornibus adestas,
Virgineum caput est—*

so runs the solemn invocation of Bacchus in Ovid. He could thus show himself also without horns, and did so when he would appear in his virginal beauty. The artists certainly would also wish so to represent him, and would therefore avoid

every less pleasing adjunct. Such an adjunct the horns would have been if attached to the diadem, as we may see them on a head in the royal cabinet at Berlin. Such an adjunct was the diadem itself, hiding the beautiful brow, and for this reason it occurs on the statues of Bacchus just as rarely as the horns, although indeed it was dispensed with just as often by the poets, both in the representations of Bacchus and in those of his great progenitor. The horns and the diadem prompted the poet's allusions to the deeds and the character of the god; to the artist, on the contrary, they were hindrances to the exhibition of greater beauties, and if Bacchus, as I believe, for that very reason had the surname *Biformis*, Δίμορφος, because he could show himself in a fair and in a terrible aspect, then it was quite natural for the artists greatly to prefer that one of his forms which best answered the purpose of their art.

Minerva and Juno in the Roman poets often dart forth lightning. "Then why not also in their images?" asks Spence. He replies, "It was an especial privilege of these two goddesses, the grounds of which were perhaps only to be learned in the Samothracian mysteries; artists, moreover, were regarded by the ancient Romans as common people, were therefore seldom admitted to those mysteries, and so doubtless knew nothing of them, and what they did not know they could not depict." I might in return ask Spence, Did these common people work out their own notions, or work at the command of more distinguished persons who might have been instructed in the mysteries? Were artists among the Greeks regarded with a like contempt? Were the Roman artists not for the greater part born Greeks? And so on.

Statius and Valerius Flaccus depict an angry Venus, and with features so terrible that at the moment we should rather take her for one of the Furies than for the Goddess of Love. Spence looks round in vain amongst the works of ancient art for such a Venus. And what is his conclusion? That more is permitted to the poet than to the sculptor or the painter? That is the conclusion he ought to have drawn, but he has accepted the principle once for all, that in a poetic description nothing is good which would be unsuitable to be represented in a painting or a statue. Consequently, the poets must have erred. "Statius and Valerius belong to an age when Roman poetry was in its decline. They show in this particular also their corrupt taste and their faulty judgment. With the poets of a better time one will not find these offences against graphic expression."

To speak in this way betrays a very poor faculty of discrimination. All the same, I do not intend to take up the cudgels for either Statius or Valerius, but will confine myself to but one general observation. The gods and sacred persons, as the artist represents them, are not entirely the same beings which the poet knows. With the artist they are personified abstractions which must constantly retain the selfsame characterisation, if they are to be recognisable. With the poet, on the other hand, they are actual persons who live and act, who possess beyond their general character other qualities and emotions, which will stand out above it according to occasion and circumstance. Venus to the sculptor is nothing but Love, he must therefore endow her with the modest, blushful beauty and all the gracious charms that delight us in beloved objects and that we therefore combine in the abstract conception of Love. Deviate however slightly from this ideal, and we shall fail to recognise the picture. Beauty, but with more majesty than modesty, is at once no Venus, but a Juno. Charms, but commanding, masculine, rather than gracious charms, give us a Minerva in place of a Venus. In reality, an angry Venus, a Venus moved by revenge and rage, is to the sculptor a contradiction in terms; for Love as Love is never angry, never revengeful. To the poet, on the other hand, Venus certainly is Love, but she is more : she is the Goddess of Love, who beyond this character has an individuality of her own, and consequently must be just as capable of the impulse of aversion as of inclination. What wonder, then, that to him she blazes in rage or anger, especially when it is injured love that so transforms her?

Certainly it is true that the artist also in composition may just as well as the poet introduce Venus or any other divinity, out of her character, as a being actually living and acting. But in that case her actions must at least not contradict her character, even if they are not direct consequences of it. Venus commits to her son's charge her divine weapons, this action the artist can represent as well as the poet. Here nothing hinders him from giving to Venus all the grace and beauty that appertain to her as the Goddess of Love; rather, indeed, will she thereby be so much the more recognisable in his work. But when Venus would avenge herself on her contemners, the men of Lemnos; when in magnified and savage form, with stained cheeks and disordered hair, she seizes the torch, throws around her a black vesture and stormily plunges down on a gloomy cloud; surely that is not a moment for the artist, because in

such a moment he cannot by any means make her distinguishable. It is purely a moment for the poet, since to him the privilege is granted of so closely and exactly uniting with it another aspect, in which the goddess is wholly Venus, that we do not lose sight of her even in the Fury. This Flaccus does :

*Neque enim alma videri
Jam timet, aut tereti crinem subnectitur auro
Sudereo diffusa sinus Eadem effera et ingens
Et maculis suffecta genas, primumque sonantem
Virgibus Stygis ingramque similima pallam*

Status does just the same

*Illa Paphon veterem centumque altaria linquens,
Nec vultu nec crine prior, soluisse jugalem
Ceston et Idalias procul ablegasse volucres
Fertur Erant certe, media qui noctis in umbra
Divam alios ignes majoraque tela gerentem
Tartarias inter thalamos volitasse sorores
Vulgarent : utque implicatis arcana domorum
Anguibz et sacra formidine cuncta replevit
Lumina —*

Or we might say, to the poet alone belongs the art of depicting with negative traits, and by mixing them with positive to bring two images into one. No longer the gracious Venus, no longer the hair fastened with golden clasps, floated about by no azure vesture, but without her girdle, armed with other flames, with greater arrows, companioned by like Furies. But because the artist is obliged to dispense with such an artifice, must the poet too in his turn abstain from using it? If painting will be the sister of poesy, let not the younger forbid to the elder all the garniture and bravery which she herself cannot put on.

IX

If in individual cases we wish to compare the painter and the poet with one another, the first and most important point is to observe whether both of them have had complete freedom, whether they have, in the absence of any outward compulsion, been able to aim at the highest effect of their art.

Religion was often an outward compulsion of this kind for the ancient artist. His work, designed for reverence and worship, could not always be as perfect as if he had had a single eye to the pleasure of the beholder. Superstition overloaded the gods with symbols, and the most beautiful of them were

not everywhere worshipped for their beauty. In his temple at Lemnos, from which the pious Hypsipyle rescued her father under the shape of the god, Bacchus stood horned, and so doubtless he appeared in all his temples, for the horns were a symbol that indicated his essential nature. Only the free artist who wrought his Bacchus for no holy shrine left this symbol out; and if amongst the statues of him still extant we find all without horns, this is perhaps a proof that they are not of the consecrated forms in which he was actually worshipped. Apart from this, it is highly probable that it was upon these last that the rage of the pious iconoclasts in the first centuries of Christianity chiefly fell, their fury sparing only here and there a work of art which had not been defiled by idolatrous worship.

As, however, works of both kinds are still found amongst antiquities in excavation, I should like the name of "works of art" to be reserved for those alone in which the artist could show himself actually as artist, in which beauty has been his first and last object. All the rest, in which too evident traces of religious ritual appear, are unworthy of the name, because Art here has not wrought on her own account, but has been an auxiliary of religion, looking in the material representations which she made of it more to the significant than to the beautiful, although I do not mean by this that she did not often put great significance into the beauty, or, out of indulgence to the art and finer taste of the age, remitted her attention to the former so much that the latter alone might appear to predominate.

If we make no such distinction, then the connoisseur and the antiquary will be constantly at strife because they do not understand each other. If the former, with his insight into the aims of art, contends that this or that work was never made by the ancient artist—that is to say, not as artist, not voluntarily—then the latter will assert that neither religion nor any other cause lying outside the region of art has caused the artist to make it—the artist, that is to say, as workman. He will suppose that he can refute the connoisseur with the first figure that comes to hand, which the other without scruple, but to the great annoyance of the learned world, will condemn to the rubbish-heap once more from which it has been drawn.

Yet, on the other hand, it is possible to exaggerate the influence of religion upon art. Spence affords a singular example of that tendency. He found that Vesta was not worshipped in her temple under any personal image, and thus he

deemed enough to warrant the conclusion that no statues of this goddess ever existed, and that every one so considered really represented not Vesta, but a vestal. Strange inference ! Did the artist, then, lose his right to personify a being to whom the poets gave a distinct personality, whom they make the daughter of Saturnus and Ops, whom they expose to the danger of ill-usage at the hands of Priapus, and all else they relate of her—did he lose his right, I ask, to personify this being in his own way, because she was worshipped in one temple merely under the symbol of fire? For Spence here falls into this further error: that what Ovid says only of a certain temple of Vesta—namely, of that at Rome—he extends to all temples of the goddess without distinction and to her worship in general. She was not everywhere worshipped as she was worshipped in this temple at Rome, nor even in Italy itself before Numa built it. Numa desired to see no divinity represented in human or animal form, and without doubt the reform which he introduced in the service of Vesta consisted in this, that he banished from it all personal representation. Ovid himself teaches us that before Numa's time there were statues of Vesta in her temple, which when her priestess Sylvia became a mother raised their maiden hands in shame before their eyes. That even in the temples which the goddess had in the Roman provinces outside the city her worship was not wholly of the kind which Numa prescribed, various ancient inscriptions appear to prove, where mention is made of a "Pontificus Vestae" At Corinth also there was a temple of Vesta without any statues, with a mere altar whereon offerings were made to the goddess. But had the Greeks therefore no statues of Vesta? At Athens there was one in the Prytaneum, beside the statue of Peace. The people of Iasos boasted of one, which stood in their city under the open sky, that neither snow nor rain fell upon it. Pliny mentions a sitting figure from the hand of Scopas which in his time was to be seen in the Servilian Gardens at Rome. Granted that it is difficult for us now to distinguish a mere vestal from Vesta herself, does this prove that the ancients could not distinguish them, or indeed did not wish to distinguish them? Notoriously, certain characteristics indicate rather the one than the other. Only in the hands of the goddess can we expect to find the sceptre, the torch, the palladium. The tympanum which Codinus associates with her belongs to her perhaps only as the Earth, or Codinus did not recognise very well what he saw.

X

I notice another expression of surprise in Spence which shows plainly how little he can have reflected on the limits of Poetry and Painting. "As for what concerns the Muses in general," he says, "it is certainly singular that the poets are so sparing in the description of them—more sparing by far than we should expect with goddesses to whom they owe such great obligations."

What is this, but to wonder that when the poets speak of them they do not use the dumb language of the painter? Urania is for the poets the Muse of Astronomy; from her name, from her functions, we recognise her office. The artist in order to make it distinguishable must exhibit her with a pointer and a celestial globe; this wand, this celestial globe, this attitude of hers are his alphabet from which he helps us to put together the name Urania. But when the poet would say that Urania had long ago foretold his death by the stars:

Ipsa dum positus letum prædixerat astris Urania —

why should he, thinking of the painter, add thereto, Urania, the pointer in her hand, the celestial globe before her? Would it not be as if a man who can and may speak aloud should at the same time still make use of the signs which the mutes in the Turk's seraglio have invented for lack of utterance?

The very same surprise Spence again expresses concerning the personified moralities, or those divinities whom the ancients set over the virtues and the conduct of human life. "It is worthy of remark," says he, "that the Roman poets say far less of the best of these personified moralities than we should expect. The artists in this respect are much richer, and he who would learn the particular aspect and attire of each need only consult the coins of the Roman Emperors: the poets speak of these beings frequently, indeed, as of persons; in general, however, they say very little of their attributes, their attire and the rest of their outward appearance."

When the poet personifies abstract qualities, these are sufficiently characterised by their names and by what they do. To the artist these means are wanting. He must therefore attach symbols to his personifications by which they can be distinguished. By these symbols, because they are something different and mean something different, they become allegorical figures. A woman with a bridle in her hand; another leaning

on a pillar, are in art allegorical beings. But Temperance and Steadfastness are to the poet allegorical beings, and merely personified abstractions. The symbols, in the artist's representation, necessity has invented. For in no other way can he make plain what this or that figure signifies. But what the artist is driven to by necessity, why should the poet force on himself when no such necessity is laid upon him?

What surprises Spence so much deserves to be prescribed to the poets as a law. They must not make painting's indigence the rule of their wealth. They must not regard the means which Art has invented in order to follow poetry as if they were perfections which they have reason to envy. When the artist adorns a figure with symbols, he raises a mere figure to a superior being. But when the poet makes use of these plastic bedizements, he makes of a superior being a mere lay-figure.

And just as this rule is authenticated by its observance amongst the ancient poets, so is its deliberate violation a favourite weakness amongst their successors. All their creatures of imagination go in masquerade, and those who understand this masquerade best generally understand least the chief thing of all, which is to let their creatures act and to distinguish and characterise them by their actions.

Yet amongst the attributes with which the artists distinguish their abstract personalities there is one sort which is more susceptible and more worthy of poetic employment. I mean those which properly have nothing allegorical in their nature, but are to be regarded as implements of which the beings to whom they are assigned would or might make use when acting as real persons. The bridle in the hand of Temperance, the pillar on which Steadfastness leans, are purely allegorical, and thus of no use to the poet. The scales in the hand of Justice are certainly less purely allegorical, because the right use of the scales is really a part of justice. But the lyre or flute in the hand of a Muse, the spear in the hand of Mars, hammer and tongs in the hands of Vulcan, are not symbols at all, but mere instruments, without which these beings could not effect the achievements we ascribe to them. Of this kind are the attributes which the ancient poets did sometimes weave into their descriptions, and which I on that ground, distinguishing them from the allegorical, would call the poetic. The latter signify the thing itself, the former only some likeness of it.

XI

Count Caylus, again, appears to require that the poet shall embellish the creatures of his imagination with allegorical attributes. The Count was more at home with painting than with poetry. In the work, nevertheless, where he expresses this requirement I have found the suggestion of more important considerations, the most essential of which, for the better judging of them, I will mention here.

The artist, according to the Count's view, should make himself very thoroughly acquainted with the greatest of descriptive poets, with Homer, with this "second Nature." He shows him what rich and still unused material for most admirable pictures is offered by the story handled by the Greek, and how much more perfect his delineations will prove the more closely he clings to the very smallest circumstances noticed by the poet.

Now in this proposition we see a mingling of the two kinds of imitation which we have separated above. The painter is not only to imitate what the poet has imitated, but he is further to imitate it with the self-same features; he is to use the poet not as narrator only, but as poet.

This second species of imitation, however, which detracts so much from the poet's merit, why is it not equally disparaging to the artist? If before Homer such a succession of pictures as Count Caylus cites from his pages had been extant, and we were aware that the poet had based his work on them, would he not lose unspeakably in our estimation? How comes it that we withdraw from the artist no whit of our esteem even though he does nothing more than translate the words of the poet into figures and colours?

The reason appears to be this. With the artist we deem the execution more difficult than the invention, with the poet, again, it is the contrary, and we deem the execution, as compared with the invention, the lighter task. Had Virgil taken from the sculptured group the entangling of Laocoon and his children, the merit in his picture which we consider the greater and the harder of attainment would be lost, and only the smaller would remain. For to shape this entangling by the power of imagination is far more important than to express it in words. Had, on the other hand, the artist borrowed this entangling from the poet, he would still, in our minds, retain sufficient merit, although the merit of invention is withdrawn. For

expression in marble is more difficult by far than expression in words, and when we weigh invention and representation against each other we are always inclined to abate our demands on the artist for the one, in proportion to the excess we feel that we have received of the other.

There are two cases in which it is a greater merit for the artist to copy Nature through the medium of the poet's imitation than without it. The painter who represents a lovely landscape according to the description of a Thomson has done more than he who copies it direct from Nature. The latter has his model before him; the former must first of all strain his imagination to the point that enables him to see it before him. The one makes a thing of beauty out of lively sensuous impressions, the other from weak and wavering descriptions of arbitrary signs.

But natural as the readiness may be to abate in our demands on the artist for the particular merit of invention, it is equally so on his part, for like reasons, to be indifferent to it. For when he sees that invention can never become his more shining merit, that his greatest praise depends on execution, it becomes all one to him whether the former is old or new, used once or times without number, and whether it belongs to himself or to another. He remains within the narrow range of a few designs, become familiar both to him and to everybody, and directs his inventive faculty merely to changes in the already known and to new combinations of old subjects. That, too, is actually the idea which the manuals of painting connect with the word *Invention*. For although certainly they divide into the pictorial and the poetic, yet the poetic is not made to consist in the production of the design itself, but purely in the arrangement or the expression. It is invention, but not invention of the whole, only of separate parts and their position in relation to each other. It is invention, but of that lower type which Horace recommended to his tragic poet :

. . . *Tuque*
Rectus Iliacum carmen deducis in actus
Quam si proferres ignota indactaque primus.

Recommended, I say, but not commanded. Recommended, as easier for him, more fitting, more advantageous, but not commanded as better and nobler in itself.

In fact the poet has a great advantage who treats a well-known story and familiar characters. A hundred indifferent trifles which otherwise would be indispensable to the under-

standing of the whole he can pass by; and the more quickly he becomes intelligible to his hearers, the more quickly he can interest them. This advantage the painter also has if his theme is not strange to us, if we make out at the first glance the purpose and meaning of his entire composition, if we at once not merely see his characters speaking, but hear also what they speak. It is on the first glance that the main effect depends, and if this forces on us troublesome reflection and conjecture, our inclination to be moved grows cold; in order to be avenged on the unintelligible artist, we harden ourselves against the expression, and woe betide him if he has sacrificed beauty to expression! We then find nothing whatever that can charm us to tarry before his work; what we see does not please us; and what we are to think concerning it we are left uninstructed.

Now let us consider these two things together, first, that the invention or novelty of the theme is far from being the principal thing that we desire of the painter; secondly, that a well-known theme furthers and facilitates the effect of his art; and I judge that the reason why he so seldom attempts new themes we need not, with Count Caylus, seek in his convenience, his ignorance, or the difficulty of the mechanical part of art, demanding all his time and diligence; but we shall find it more deeply founded, and it may be that what at first appears to be the limitations of art and the spoiling of our pleasure we shall be inclined to praise as a restraint wise in itself and useful to ourselves. Nor am I afraid that experience will confute me. The painters will thank the Count for his goodwill, but hardly follow his counsels so generally as he expects. If they should, in another hundred years a new Caylus would be wanted who should bring again to remembrance the old themes and reconduct the artist into the field where others before him have gathered immortal laurels. Or do we desire that the public shall be as learned as the connoisseur with his books? That to the public all scenes of history or fable which might suggest a beautiful picture shall become known and familiar? I grant that the artists would have done better if since Raphael's day they had made Homer instead of Ovid their manual. But as that in fact has not happened, let us leave the public in their old rut, and not make their pleasure harder to attain than a pleasure must be in order to be what it should.

Protogenes had painted the mother of Aristotle. I don't know how much the philosopher paid him for the picture. But, either instead of payment or in addition thereto, he gave

him counsel that was worth more than the payment. For I cannot imagine that his counsel was a mere flattery. But chiefly because he considered the need of art—to be intelligible—he advised him to paint the achievements of Alexander, achievements of which at that time all the world was speaking, and of which he could foresee that they would be memorable also to posterity. Yet Protogenes had not discernment enough to follow this counsel; *impetus animi*, says Pliny, *et quaedam artis libido*, a certain arrogance of art, a certain lust for the strange and the unknown, attracted him to quite other subjects. He preferred to paint the story of a Jalysus, of a Cydippe and the like, of which to-day one cannot even guess what they represented.

XII

Homer treats of a twofold order of beings and actions: visible and invisible. This distinction it is not possible for painting to suggest, with it all is visible, and visible in one particular way. When, therefore, Count Caylus lets the pictures of the invisible actions run on in unbroken sequence with the visible, when in the pictures of mingled actions, in which visible and invisible things take part, he does not, and perhaps cannot, suggest how the latter, which only we who contemplate the picture should discover therein, are so to be introduced that the persons in the picture do not see them, or at least must appear not necessarily to see them, it is inevitable that the entire composition, as well as many a separate portion of it, becomes confused, inconceivable, and self-contradictory.

Yet, with the book in one's hand, there might be some remedy for this error. The worst of it is simply this, that by the abrogation of the difference between the visible and invisible things all the characteristic features are at once lost by which the higher are raised above the inferior species. For example, when at last the divided gods come to blows among themselves over the fate of the Trojans, the whole struggle passes with the poet invisibly, and this invisibility permits the imagination to enlarge the stage, and leaves it free play to conceive the persons of the gods and their actions as great, and elevated as far above common humanity as ever it pleases. But painting must assume a visible stage the various necessary parts of which become the scale for the persons acting on it, a scale which the eye has

immediately before it, and whose disproportion, as regards the higher beings, turns these higher beings, who were so great in the poet's delineation, into sheer monsters on the canvas of the artist.

Minerva, on whom in this struggle Mars ventures the first assault, steps back and snatches up from the ground with powerful hand a black, rough, massive stone, which in ancient days many hands of men together had rolled thither as a landmark—

‘Ἡ δ’ ἀναχασσαμένη λίθον εἴλετο χειρὶ παχείῃ,
Κείμενον ἐν πεδίῳ, μέλανατρηχύν τε μέγαν τε,
Τὸν δ’ ἄνδρες πρότεροι θέσαν ἔμμεναι οὖρον ἀρούρης.

In order to estimate adequately the size of this stone, let us bear in mind that Homer makes his heroes as strong again as the strongest men of his time, and represents these, too, as far excelled in strength by the men whom Nestor had known in his youth. Now, I ask, if Minerva flings a stone which not one man, but several men of Nestor's youth had set for a landmark, if Minerva flings such a stone at Mars, of what stature is the goddess to be? If her stature is in proportion to the size of the stone, the marvellous vanishes. A man who is three times bigger than I must naturally also be able to fling a three-times bigger stone. But if the stature of the goddess is not in keeping with the size of the stone, there is imported into the picture an obvious improbability, the offence of which is not removed by the cold reflection that a goddess must have superhuman strength. Where I see a greater effect I would also see a greater instrument. And Mars, struck down by this mighty stone—

‘Ἐπτά δ’ ἔπεσχε πέλεθρα . . .

covered three hides of land. It is impossible that the painter can give the god this monstrous bulk. Yet if he does not, then Mars does not lie upon the ground, not the Homeric Mars, but only a common warrior.

Longinus remarks that it often appeared to him as if Homer wished to elevate his men to gods and to degrade his gods to men. Painting carries out this degradation. In painting everything vanishes completely which with the poet sets the gods yet higher than godlike men. Stature, strength, swiftness—of which Homer has in store a higher and more wonderful degree for his gods than he bestows on his most pre-eminent heroes—

must in picture sink down to the common measure of humanity, and Jupiter and Agamemnon, Apollo and Achilles, Ajax and Mars, become the same kind of beings, to be recognised no otherwise than by stipulated outward signs.

The means of which painting makes use to indicate that in her compositions this or that must be regarded as invisible, is a thin cloud in which she covers it from the view of the persons concerned. This cloud seems to have been borrowed from Homer himself. For when in the tumult of the battle one of the greater heroes comes into danger from which only heavenly power can deliver him, the poet causes him to be enveloped by the tutelary deity in a thick cloud or in actual night, and thus to be withdrawn from the place; as Paris was by Venus, Idaeus by Neptune, Hector by Apollo. And this mist, this cloud Caylus never forgets heartily to commend to the artist when he is sketching for him a picture of such events. But who does not perceive that with the poet the enveloping in mist and darkness is nothing but a poetical way of saying invisible? It has, on this account, always surprised me to find this poetical expression realised and an actual cloud introduced into the picture, behind which the hero, as behind a screen, stands hidden from his enemy. That was not the poet's intention. That is to transgress the limits of painting; for this cloud is here a true hieroglyph, a mere symbolic sign, that does not make the rescued hero invisible, but calls out to the beholder, "You must regard him as invisible to you." This is no better than the inscribed labels which issue from the mouths of the persons in ancient Gothic pictures.

It is true Homer makes Achilles, when Apollo snatches away Hector from him, strike yet three times at the thick vapour with his spear: *τρίς δ' ἥρα τῷ πε βαθεῖαν*. But even that, in the poet's language, means no more than that Achilles became so enraged that he struck yet thrice before he noticed that he no longer had his foe in front of him. An actual mist Achilles did not see, and the whole artifice by which the gods made things invisible consisted not at all in the cloud, but in the swift snatching. Only, in order to show at the same time that no human eye could follow the body thus snatched away, the poet first of all envelops it beforehand in vapour; not that instead of the body withdrawn a fog was seen, but that whatever is under fog we think of as not visible. Therefore at times he inverts the order of things, and, instead of making the object invisible, causes the subject to be struck with blindness. Thus

Neptune darkens the eyes of Achilles to save Æneas from his murderous hands, removing him in a moment from out the tumult of the rearguard. In fact, however, the eyes of Achilles are here just as little darkened as in the other case the withdrawn heroes were enveloped in fog; the poet merely adds the one thing and the other, in order thereby to make more perceptible the extreme swiftness of the withdrawal which we call the vanishing.

The Homeric mist, however, the painters have made their own not merely in the cases where Homer himself uses or would have used it—in actual invisibilities or vanishings—but everywhere when the beholder is to recognise something in the picture which the persons in it, either altogether or in part, do not recognise. Minerva became visible to Achilles alone when she held him back from assaulting Agamemnon. “To express this,” says Caylus, “I know no other way than to veil her in a cloud from the rest of the council.” This is quite contrary to the spirit of the poet. To be invisible is the natural condition of his gods: no blinding, no cutting-off of the light, was needed in order that they should not be seen, but an illumination, a heightening of mortal vision, was necessary if they were to be seen. It is not enough, therefore, that the cloud is an arbitrary and unnatural sign with the painters; this arbitrary sign has not at all the positive significance which it might have as such, for they use it as frequently to make the visible invisible as they do the reverse.

XIII

If Homer's works were entirely lost, and nothing was left of his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* save a succession of pictures such as Caylus has suggested might be drawn from them, should we from these pictures, even from the hand of the most perfect master, be able to form the conception we now have, I do not say of the poet's whole endowment, but even of his pictorial talent alone? Let us try the experiment with the first passage that occurs to us—the picture of the pestilence. What do we perceive on the canvas of the artist? Dead corpses, flaming funeral pyres, dying men busy with the dead, the angry god upon a cloud letting fly his arrows. The greatest riches of this picture is, compared with the poet, mere poverty. For if we were to replace Homer from the picture, what could we make

him say? "Then did Apollo become enraged and shot his arrows amongst the Grecian host. Many Greeks died and their corpses were burned." Now let us turn to Homer himself :—

Βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων | χωόμενος κῆρ,
 Τόξ' ὤμοισιν ἔχων | ἀμφηρεφέα τε φαρέτρην·
 Ἐκλαγξαν δ' ἄρ' ὀϊστοὶ ἐπ' ὤμων χωομένοιο,
 Αὐτοῦ κινηθέντος· ὁ δ' ἦε νυκτὶ εἰσικώς·
 Ἔζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε νεῶν, μετὰ | δ' ἰδὼν ἔηκε·
 Δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένετ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο·
 Οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπὶ ἔχετο | καὶ κύνας ἀργούς,
 Αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖσι | βέλος ἔχευε κῆρ ἐφίεις
 Βάλλ'· αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ | νεκρῶν καίοντο θαμναί.

Just as far as life is above painting, the poet here is above the painter. With his bow and quiver the enraged Apollo descends from the rocky peak of Olympus. I do not merely see him descend, I hear him. At every step the arrows rattle about the shoulders of the wrathful god. He glides along like night. And now he sits opposite the ships—fearfully twangs the silver bow—he darts the first arrow at the mules and dogs. And then, with a more poisonous shaft, he strikes the men themselves, and everywhere without cessation break into flame the corpse-encumbered pyres. The musical painting which we hear in the words of the poet it is not possible to translate into another language. It is just as impossible to gather it from the material picture, although it is only a very trivial advantage which the poetic picture possesses. The chief advantage is that what the material painting drawn from him exhibits the poet leads us up to through a whole gallery of pictures.

But, then, perhaps the pestilence is not an advantageous subject for painting. Here is another having more charms for the eye—the gods taking counsel together over their wine. A golden palace open to the sky, arbitrary groups of the most beautiful and the most worshipful forms, their cups in their hands, waited on by Hebe, the image of eternal youth. What architecture, what masses of light and shade, what contrasts, what manifold expression! Where can I begin, and where leave off, to feast my eyes? If the painter so enchants me, how much more will the poet! I turn to his pages, and find—that I am deceived. Four simple lines only, such as might serve for the inscription of a picture; the material for a picture is there, but they themselves do not make a picture :—

Οἱ δὲ θεοὶ παρ Ζηνὶ καθήμενοι ἡγορόωντο
 Χρυσέω ἐν δαπέδῳ, μετὰ δὲ σφίσι πόντια "Ἡβῇ
 Νέκταρ ἐωνοχέει· τοὶ δὲ χρυσεοῖς δεπάεσσιν
 Δειδέχατ' ἀλλήλους, Τρώων πόλιν εἰσορόωντες.

This an Apollonius or an even more mediocre poet would have said equally well, and Homer here stands just as far below the painter as in the former case the painter stood below him.

Yet more, Caylus finds in the whole of the Fourth Book of the *Iliad* no other picture, not one, than in these four lines. "However much," he remarks, "the Fourth Book is marked by manifold encouragements to the attempt, owing to the abundance of brilliant and contrasted characters and to the art with which the poet shows us the entire multitude whom he will set in action—yet it is perfectly unusable for painting." He might have added, Rich as it is otherwise in that which we call poetic picture. For truly these are for number and perfection as remarkable as in any other Book. Where is there a more finished or more striking picture than that of Pandarus, as, on the incitement of Minerva, he breaks the truce and lets fly his arrow at Menelaus? Or that of the approach of the Grecian host? Or that of the two-sided, simultaneous onset? Or that of Ulysses' deed by which he avenges the death of his Leucus?

What, then, follows from the fact that not a few of the finest descriptions in Homer afford no picture for the artist, and that the artist can draw pictures from him where he himself has none? That those which he has and the artist can use would be very poverty-stricken pictures if they did not show more than can be shown by the artist? What else do they, but give a negative to my former question? That from the material paintings for which the poems of Homer provide the subjects, however numerous they may be and however excellent, nothing can be concluded as to the pictorial talent of the poet.

XIV

But if it is so, and if one poem may yield very happy results for the painter yet itself be not pictorial; if, again, another in its turn may be very pictorial and yet offer nothing to the painter; this is enough to dispose of Count Caylus' notion, which would make this kind of utility the criterion or test of the poets and settle their rank by the number of pictures which

they provide for the artist. Far be it from us, even if only by our silence, to allow this notion to gain the authority of a rule. Milton would fall the first innocent sacrifice to it. For it seems really that the contemptuous verdict which Caylus passes upon him was not mere national prejudice, but rather a consequence of his supposed principle. "The loss of sight," he says, "may well be the nearest resemblance Milton bore to Homer." True, Milton can fill no galleries. But if, so long as I had the bodily eye, its sphere must also be the sphere of my inward eye, then would I, in order to be free of this limitation, set a great value on the loss of the former. The *Paradise Lost* is not less the first epic poem since Homer on the ground of its providing few pictures, than the *Leidensgeschichte Christi* is a poem because we can hardly put the point of a needle into it without touching a passage that might have employed a multitude of the greatest artists. The Evangelists relate the facts with all the dry simplicity possible, and the artist uses the manifold parts of the story without their having shown on their side the smallest spark of pictorial genius. There are paintable and unpaintable facts, and the historian can relate the most paintable in just as unpictorial a fashion as the poet can represent the least paintable pictorially.

We are merely misled by the ambiguity of words if we take the matter otherwise. A poetic picture is not necessarily that which can be transmuted into a material painting; but every feature, every combination of features by means of which the poet makes his subject so perceptible that we are more clearly conscious of this subject than of his words is called pictorial, is styled a picture, because it brings us nearer to the degree of illusion of which the material painting is specially capable and which can most readily and most easily be drawn from the material painting.

XV

Now the poet, as experience shows, can raise to this degree of illusion the representations even of other than visible objects. Consequently the artist must necessarily be denied whole classes of pictures in which the poet has the advantage over him. Dryden's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day is full of musical pictures that cannot be touched by the paint-brush. But I will not lose myself in instances of the kind, from which in the end we learn

nothing more than that colours are not tones and that eyes are not ears.

I will confine myself to the pictures of purely visible objects which are common to the poet and the painter. How comes it that many poetical pictures of this kind cannot be used by the painter, and, *vice versa*, many actual pictures lose the best part of their effect in the hands of the poet?

Examples may help us. I repeat it—the picture of Pandarus in the Fourth Book of the *Iliad* is one of the most finished and most striking in all Homer. From the seizing of the bow to the very flight of the arrow every moment is depicted, and all these moments are kept so close together, and yet so distinctly separate, that if we did not know how a bow was to be managed we might learn it from this picture alone. Pandarus draws forth his bow, fixes the bowstring, opens his quiver, chooses a yet unused, well-feathered shaft, sets the arrow on the string, draws back both string and arrow down to the notch, the string is brought near to his breast and the iron head of the arrow to the bow; back flies the great bent bow with a twang, the bowstring whirs, off springs the arrow flying eager for its mark.

This admirable picture Caylus cannot have overlooked. What, then, did he find in it to render it incapable of employing his artist? And for what reason did he consider fitter for this purpose the assembly of the carousing gods in council? In the one, as in the other, we find visible subjects, and what more does the poet want than visible subjects in order to fill his canvas? The solution of the problem must be this. Although both subjects, as being visible, are alike capable of actual painting, yet there exists the essential distinction between them, that the former is a visible continuous action, the different parts of which occur step by step in succession of time, the latter, on the other hand, is a visible arrested action, the different parts of which develop side by side in space. But now, if painting, in virtue of her signs or the methods of her imitation, which she can combine only in space, must wholly renounce time, then continuous actions as such cannot be reckoned amongst her subjects; but she must content herself with actions set side by side, or with mere bodies which by their attitudes can be supposed an action. Poetry, on the other hand—

XVI

But I will turn to the foundations and try to argue the matter from first principles.

My conclusion is this. If it is true that painting employs in its imitations quite other means or signs than poetry employs, the former—that is to say, figures and colours in space—but the latter articulate sounds in time; as, unquestionably, the signs used must have a definite relation to the thing signified, it follows that signs arranged together side by side can express only subjects which, or the various parts of which, exist thus side by side, whilst signs which succeed each other can express only subjects which, or the various parts of which, succeed each other.

Subjects which, or the various parts of which, exist side by side, may be called *bodies*. Consequently, bodies with their visible properties form the proper subjects of painting.

Subjects which or the various parts of which succeed each other may in general be called *actions*. Consequently, actions form the proper subjects of poetry.

Yet all bodies exist not in space alone, but also in time. They continue, and may appear differently at every moment and stand in different relations. Every one of these momentary appearances and combinations is the effect of one preceding and can be the cause of one following, and accordingly be likewise the central point of an action. Consequently, painting can also imitate actions, but only by way of suggestion through bodies.

On the other hand, actions cannot subsist for themselves, but must attach to certain things or persons. Now in so far as these things are bodies or are regarded as bodies, poetry too depicts bodies, but only by way of suggestion through actions.

Painting, in her co-existing compositions, can use only one single moment of the action, and must therefore choose the most pregnant, from which what precedes and follows will be most easily apprehended.

Just in the same manner poetry also can use, in her continuous imitations, only one single property of the bodies, and must therefore choose that one which calls up the most living picture of the body on that side from which she is regarding it. Here, indeed, we find the origin of the rule which insists on the unity and consistency of descriptive epithets, and on economy in the delineations of bodily subjects.

This is a dry chain of reasoning, and I should put less trust in it if I did not find it completely confirmed by Homer's practice, or if, rather, it were not Homer's practice itself which had led me to it. Only by these principles can the great manner of the Greeks be settled and explained, and its rightness established against the opposite manner of so many modern poets, who would emulate the painter in a department where they must necessarily be outdone by him.

Homer, I find, paints nothing but continuous actions, and all bodies, all single things, he paints only by their share in those actions, and in general only by one feature. What wonder, then, that the painter, where Homer himself paints, finds little or nothing for him to do, his harvest arising only there where the story brings together a multitude of beautiful bodies, in beautiful attitudes, in a place favourable to art, the poet himself painting these bodies, attitudes, places, just as little as he chooses? Let the reader run through the whole succession of pictures piece by piece, as Caylus suggests, and he will discover in every one of them evidence for our contention.

Here, then, I leave the Count, who wishes to make the painter's palette the touchstone of the poet, that I may expound in closer detail the manner of Homer.

For one thing, I say, Homer commonly names one feature only. A ship is to him now the black ship, now the hollow ship, now the swift ship, at most the well-rowed black ship. Beyond that he does not enter on a picture of the ship. But certainly of the navigating, the putting to sea, the disembarking of the ship, he makes a detailed picture, one from which the painter must make five or six separate pictures if he would get it in its entirety upon his canvas.

If indeed special circumstances compel Homer to fix our glance for a while on some single corporeal object, in spite of this no picture is made of it which the painter could follow with his brush; for Homer knows how, by innumerable artifices, to set this object in a succession of moments, at each of which it assumes a different appearance, and in the last, of which the painter must await it in order to show us, fully arisen, what in the poet we see arising. For instance, if Homer wishes to let us see the chariot of Juno, then Hebe must put it together piece by piece before our eyes. We see the wheels, the axles, the seat, the pole and straps and traces, not so much as it is when complete, but as it comes together under the hands of Hebe. On the wheels alone does the poet expend more than one feature,

showing us the brazen spokes, the golden rims, the tires of bronze, the silver hub, in fullest detail. We might suggest that as there were more wheels than one, so in the description just as much more time must be given to them as their separate putting-on would actually itself require.

“Ἡβη δ’ ἀμφ’ ὀχέεσσι θοῶς βάλε καμπύλα κύκλα,
 Χάλκεα ὀκτάκνημα, σιδηρέω ἄξονι ἀμφίς
 Τῶν ἧ τοι χρυσῇ ἵτυς ἀφθιτος, αὐτὰρ ὑπερθε
 Χάλκε’ ἐπίσσωτρα προσαρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι·
 Πλήμναι δ’ ἀργύρου εἰσὶ περιδρομοὶ ἀμφοτέρωθεν·
 Δίφρος δὲ χρυσεῖσι καὶ ἀργυρεῖσιν ἱμαῖσιν
 Ἐντέταται, δοιαὶ δὲ περιδρομοὶ ἀντυγές εἰσι.
 Τοῦ δ’ ἐξ ἀργύρεος ῥυμὸς πέλεν· αὐτὰρ ἐπ’ ἄκρῳ
 Δῆσε χρυσεῖον καλὸν ζυγόν, ἐν δὲ λέπαδνα
 Κάλ’ ἐβαλε χρύσεια.

If Homer would show us how Agamemnon was dressed, then the King must put on his whole attire piece by piece before our eyes: the soft undervest, the great mantle, the fine laced boots, the sword; and now he is ready and grasps the sceptre. We see the attire as the poet paints the action of attiring; another would have described the garments down to the smallest ribbon, and we should have seen nothing of the action.

Μαλακὸν δ’ ἐνδυε χιτῶνα,
 Καλὸν νηγάτεον, περὶ δὲ μέγα βάλλετο φᾶρος·
 Ποσσὶ δ’ ὑπὸ λιπαροῖσιν ἐδήσατο καλὰ πέδιλα,
 Ἀμφὶ δ’ ἄρ’ ὁμοῖσιν βάλλετο ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον·
 Εἴλετο δὲ σκῆπτρον πατρῷον, ἀφθιτον αἰεὶ.

And of this sceptre which here is called merely the paternal, ancestral sceptre, as in another place he calls a similar one merely χρυσεῖος ἥλοισι πεπαρμένον—that is, the sceptre mounted with studs of gold—if, I say, of this mighty sceptre we are to have a fuller and exacter picture, what, then, does Homer? Does he paint for us, besides the golden nails, the wood also and the carved knob? Perhaps he might if the description were intended for a book of heraldry, so that in after times one like to it might be made precisely to pattern. And yet I am certain that many a modern poet would have made just such a heraldic description, with the naive idea that he has himself so painted it because the painter may possibly follow him. But what does Homer care how far he leaves the

painter behind? Instead of an image he gives us the story of the sceptre: first, it is being wrought by Vulcan; then it gleams in the hands of Jupiter; again, it marks the office of Mercury; once more, it is the marshal's baton of the warlike Pelops, and yet again, the shepherd's crook of peace-loving Atreus.

Σκῆπτρον ἔχων, τὸ μὲν Ἥφαιστος κάμει τεύχων.
 Ἥφαιστος μὲν δῶκε Διὶ Κρονίῳ ἀνακτι,
 Αὐτὰρ ἄρα Ζεὺς δῶκε διακτόρῳ ἀργειφόντῃ
 Ἑρμείας δὲ ἀναξ δῶκεν Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ,
 Αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτε Πέλοψ δῶκ' Ἀτρεῖ, ποιμένι λαῶν
 Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνήσκων ἔλιπεν πολύαρνι Θυέστῃ,
 Αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτε Θυέστ' Ἀγαμέμνονι λεῖπε φερόσθηναι,
 Πολλῆσιν νῆσοισι καὶ Ἀργεὶ παντὶ ἀνάσσειναι.

And so in the end I know this sceptre better than if a painter had laid it before my eyes or a second Vulcan delivered it into my hands. It would not surprise me if I found that one of the old commentators of Homer had admired this passage as the most perfect allegory of the origin, progress, establishment, and hereditary succession of the royal power amongst mankind. True, I should smile if I were to read that Vulcan, the maker of this sceptre, as fire, as the most indispensable thing for the preservation of mankind, represented in general the satisfaction of those wants which moved the first men to subject themselves to the rule of an individual monarch; that the first king, a son of Time (Ζεὺς Κρονίῳ), was an honest ancient who wished to share his power with, or wholly transfer it to, a wise and eloquent man, a Mercury (διακτόρῳ ἀργειφόντῃ); that the wily orator, at the time when the infant State was threatened by foreign foes, resigned his supreme power to the bravest warrior (Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ), that the brave warrior, when he had quelled the aggressors and made the realm secure, was able to hand it over to his son, who, as a peace-loving ruler, as a benevolent shepherd of his people (ποιμὴν λαῶν), made them acquainted with luxury and abundance, whereby after his death the wealthiest of his relations (πολύαρνι Θυέστῃ) had the way opened to him for attracting to himself by presents and bribes that which hitherto only confidence had conferred and which merit had considered more a burden than an honour, and to secure it to his family for the future as a kind of purchased estate. I should smile, but nevertheless should be confirmed in my esteem for the poet to whom so much meaning can be

attributed.—This, however, is a digression, and I am now regarding the story of the sceptre merely as an artifice to make us tarry over the one particular object without being drawn into the tedious description of its parts. Even when Achilles swears by his sceptre to avenge the contempt with which Agamemnon has treated him, Homer gives us the history of this sceptre. We see it growing green upon the mountains, the axe cutting it from the trunk, stripping it of leaves and bark and making it fit to serve the judges of the people for a symbol of their godlike dignity.

Ναὶ μὰ τόδε σκῆπτρον, τὸ μὲν οὐ ποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄρους
 Φύσει, ἐπεὶ δὴ πρῶτα τομὴν ἐν ὄρεσσι λέλοιπεν,
 Οὐδ' ἀναθελήσει' περὶ γάρ ῥά ἐ χαλκὸς ἔλεψε
 Φύλλα τε καὶ φλοιὸν· νῦν αὐτὲ μιν ὕψος Ἀχαιῶν
 Ἐν παλάμῃς φέρεουσιν δικαστῆται, οἳ τε θέμιστας
 Πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύεται . . .

It was not so much incumbent upon Homer to depict two staves of different material and shape as to furnish us with a symbol of the difference in the powers of which these staves were the sign. The former a work of Vulcan, the latter carved by an unknown hand in the mountains; the former the ancient property of a noble house, the latter intended for any fist that can grasp it; the former extended by a monarch over all Argos and many an isle besides, the latter borne by any one out of the midst of the Grecian hosts, one to whom with others the guarding of the laws had been committed. Such was actually the distance that separated Agamemnon from Achilles, a distance which Achilles himself, in all the blindness of his wrath, could not help admitting.

Yet not in those cases alone where Homer combines with his descriptions this kind of ulterior purpose, but even where he has to do with nothing but the picture, he will distribute this picture in a sort of story of the object, in order to let its parts, which we see side by side in Nature, follow in his painting after each other and as it were keep step with the flow of the narrative. For instance, he would paint for us the bow of Pandarus—a bow of horn, of such and such a length, well polished, and mounted with gold plate at the extremities. How does he manage it? Does he count out before us all these properties dryly one after the other? Not at all; that would be to sketch, to make a copy of such a bow, but not to paint it. He begins

with the chase of the deer, from the horns of which the bow was made; Pandarus had waylaid and killed it amongst the crags, the horns were of extraordinary length, and so he destined them for a bow; they are wrought, the maker joins them, mounts them, polishes them. And thus, as we have already said, with the poet we see arising what with the painter we can only see as already arisen.

Τόξον ἐΰξοον ἱξάλου αἰγὸς
 Ἀγρίου, ὃν ῥά ποτ' αὐτὸς ὑπὸ στέρνοιο τυχήσας
 Πέτρης ἐκβαίνοντα δεδεγμένος ἐν προδοκῇσι,
 Βεβλήκει πρὸς στήθος ὃ δ' ὕπτιος ἔμπεσε πέτρη.
 Τοῦ κέρα ἐκ κεφαλῆς ἐκκαυδεκάδωρα πεφύκει
 Καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀσκήσας κεραοξόος ἤραρε τέκτων,
 Πᾶν δ' ἐὺ λειήνας χρυσέην ἐπέθηκε κορώνην.

I should never have done, if I were to cite all the instances of this kind. A multitude of them will occur to everyone who knows his Homer.

XVII

But, some will object, the signs or characters which poetry employs are not solely such as succeed each other; they may be also arbitrary; and, as arbitrary signs, they are certainly capable of representing bodies just as they exist in space. We find instances of this in Homer himself, for we have only to remember his Shield of Achilles in order to have the most decisive example in how detailed and yet poetical a manner some single thing can be depicted, with its various parts side by side.

I will reply to this twofold objection. I call it twofold, because a just conclusion must prevail even without examples, and, on the other hand, the example of Homer weighs with me even if I know not how to justify it by any argument. It is true, as the signs of speech are arbitrary, so it is perfectly possible that by it we can make the parts of a body follow each other just as truly as in actuality they are found existing side by side. Only this is a property of speech and its signs in general, but not in so far as it suits best the purposes of poetry. The poet is not concerned merely to be intelligible, his representations should not merely be clear and plain, though this may satisfy the prose writer. He desires rather to make the

ideas awakened by him within us living things, so that for the moment we realise the true sensuous impressions of the objects he describes, and cease in this moment of illusion to be conscious of the means—namely, his words—which he employs for his purpose. This is the substance of what we have already said of the poetic picture. But the poet should always paint; and now let us see how far bodies with their parts set side by side are suitable for this kind of painting.

How do we arrive at the distinct representation of a thing in space? First we regard its parts singly, then the combination of these parts, and finally the whole. Our senses perform these various operations with so astonishing a swiftness that they seem to us but one, and this swiftness is imperatively necessary if we are to arrive at a conception of the whole, which is nothing more than the result of the conceptions of the parts and their combination. Provided, then, the poet leads us in the most beautiful order from one part of the object to another; provided he knows also how to make the combination of those parts equally clear—how much time does he need for that? What the eye sees at a glance, he counts out to us gradually, with a perceptible slowness, and often it happens that when we come to the last feature we have already forgotten the first. Nevertheless, we have to frame a whole from those features; to the eye the parts beheld remain constantly present, and it can run over them again and again; for the ear, on the contrary, the parts heard are lost if they do not abide in the memory. And if they so abide, what trouble, what effort it costs to renew their impressions, all of them in their due order, so vividly, to think of them together with even a moderate swiftness, and thus to arrive at an eventual conception of the whole. Let us try it by an example which may be called a masterpiece of its kind:—

*Dort ragt das hohe Haupt vom edeln Enziane
 Weit übern niedern Chor der Föbelkrauter hin,
 Ein ganzes Blumenvolk dient unter seiner Fahne,
 Sein blauer Bruder selbst duckt sich und ehret ihn.
 Der Blumen helles Gold, in Strahlen umgebogen,
 Thürrnt sich am Stengel auf, und krönt sein grau Gewan
 Der Blätter glattes Weiss, mit tiefem Grün durchzogen,
 Strahlt von dem bunten Blitz von feuchtem Diamant.
 Gerechtestes Gesetz! dass Kraft sich Zier vermähle,
 In einem schönen Leib wohnt eine schöne Seele
 Hier kriecht ein niedrig Kraut, gleich einem grauen N
 Dem die Natur sein Blatt im Kreuze hengelegt,*

*Die holde Blume zeigt die zwei vergöldeten Schnäbel,
Die ein von Amethyst gebildeter Vogel trägt.
Dort wirft ein glänzend Blatt, in Finger ausgekerbet,
Auf einen hellen Bach den grünen Widerschein ;
Der Blumen zarten Schnee, den maiter Purpur färbet,
Schliesst ein gestreifter Stern in weisse Strahlen ein
Smaragd und Rosen blühen auch auf zertretener Heide,
Und Felsen decken sich mit einem Purpurkleide.*

Here are weeds and flowers which the learned poet paints with much art and fidelity to Nature. Paints, but without any illusion whatever. I will not say that out of this picture he who has never seen these weeds and flowers can make no idea of them, or as good as none. It may be that all poetic pictures require some preliminary acquaintance with their subjects. Neither will I deny that for one who possesses such an acquaintance here the poet may not have awakened a more vivid idea of some parts. I only ask him, How does it stand with the conception of the whole? If this also is to be more vivid, then no single parts must stand out, but the higher light must appear divided equally amongst them all, our imagination must be able to run over them all with equal swiftness, in order to unite in one from them that which in Nature we see united in one. Is this the case here? And is not the case rather, as one has expressed it, "that the most perfect drawing of a painter must be entirely lifeless and dark compared with this poetic portrayal"? It remains infinitely below that which lines and colours on canvas can express, and the critic who bestows on it this exaggerated praise must have regarded it from an utterly false point of view: he must have looked rather at the ornaments which the poet has woven into it, at the heightening of the subject above the mere vegetative life, at the development of the inner perfection to which the outward beauty serves merely as a shell, than at the beauty itself and at the degree of life and resemblance in the picture which the painter and which the poet can assure to us from it. Nevertheless, it amounts here purely to the latter, and whoever says that the mere lines:—

*Der Blumen helles Gold, in Strahlen umgebogen,
Thurmt sich am Stengel auf, und krönt sein grün Gewand,
Der Blätter glattes Weiss, mit tiefem Grün durchzogen,
Strahlt von dem bunten Blatz von feuchtem Diamant,*

—that these lines in respect of their impression can compete with the imitation of a Huysum, can never have interrogated his feelings, or must be deliberately denying them. They may,

indeed, if we have the flower itself in our hands, be recited concerning it with excellent effect; but in themselves alone they say little or nothing. I hear in every word the toiling poet, and am far enough from seeing the thing itself.

Once more, then; I do not deny to speech in general the power of portraying a bodily whole by its parts: speech can do so, because its signs or characters, although they follow one another consecutively, are nevertheless arbitrary signs; but I do deny it to speech as the medium of poetry, because such verbal delineations of bodies fail of the illusion on which poetry particularly depends, and this illusion, I contend, must fail them for the reason that the *co-existence* of the physical object comes into collision with the *consecutiveness* of speech, and the former being resolved into the latter, the dismemberment of the whole into its parts is certainly made easier, but the final reunion of those parts into a whole is made uncommonly difficult and not seldom impossible.

Wherever, then, illusion does not come into the question, where one has only to do with the understanding of one's readers and appeals only to plain and as far as possible complete conceptions, those delineations of bodies (which we have excluded from poetry) may quite well find their place, and not the prose-writer alone, but the dogmatic poet (for where he dogmatizes he is not a poet) can employ them with much advantage. So Virgil, for instance, in his poem on agriculture, delineates a cow suitable for breeding from:—

. . . *Optima torvae*
Forma bovis, cui turpe caput, cui plurima cervice,
Et crurum tenuis a mento palearia pendent,
Tum longo nullus lateri modus. omnia magna,
Pes etiam, et camuris hirtae sub cornibus aures.
Nec mihi displiceat maculis insignis et albo,
Aut juga detrectans interdumque aspera cornu
Et faciem tauro propior, quaeque ardua tota,
Et gradiens ima verrit vestigia cauda.

Or a beautiful foal:—

. . . *Ille ardua cervice*
Argutumque caput, brevis albus, obesaque terga,
Luxuriantque toris ammosum pectus, etc.

For who does not see that here the poet is concerned rather with the setting forth of the parts than with the whole? He wants to reckon up for us the characteristics of a fine foal and of a well-formed cow, in order to enable us, when we have more or less taken note of these, to judge of the excellence of

the one or the other, whether, however, all these characteristics can be easily gathered together into one living picture or not, that might be to him a matter of indifference.

Beyond such performances as these, the detailed pictures of physical objects, barring the above-mentioned Homeric artifice of changing the Co-existing into an actual Successive, has always been recognised by the best judges as a frigid kind of sport for which little or nothing of genius is demanded. "When the poetic dabbler," says Horace, "can do nothing more, he begins to paint a hedge, an altar, a brook winding through pleasant meads, a brawling stream, or a rainbow :—

. . . *Lucus et ara Dianae
Et properantis aquae per amoenos ambitus agros,
Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur arcus.*"

Pope, who was a masculine man, looked back on the pictorial efforts of his poetic childhood with great contempt. He expressly required that whosoever would not unworthily bear the name of poet should as early as possible renounce the lust for description, and declared a merely descriptive poem to be a dinner of nothing but soup. Of Herr von Kleist I can avow that he was far from proud of his "Spring": had he lived longer, he would have given it an entirely different shape. He thought of putting some design into it, and mused on means by which that multitude of pictures which he seemed to have snatched haphazard, now here, now there, from the limitless field of rejuvenated Nature, might be made to arise in a natural order before his eyes and follow each other in a natural succession. He would at the same time have done what Marmontel, doubtless on the occasion of his *Eclogues*, recommended to several German poets; from a series of pictures but sparingly interspersed with sensations he would have made a succession of sensations but sparingly interspersed with pictures.

XVIII

And yet may not Homer himself sometimes have lapsed into these frigid delineations of physical objects?

I will hope that there are only a few passages to which in this case appeal can be made; and I am assured that even these few are of such a kind as rather to confirm the rule from which they seem to be exceptions. It still holds good; succession in

time is the sphere of the poet, as space is that of the painter. To bring two necessarily distant points of time into one and the same picture, as Fr. Mazzuoli has done with the Rape of the Sabine Women and their reconciling their husbands to their kinsfolk, or as Titian with the whole story of the Prodigal Son, his dissolute life, his misery, and his repentance, is nothing but an invasion of the poet's sphere by the painter, which good taste can never sanction. The several parts or things which in Nature I must needs take in at a glance if they are to produce a whole—to reckon these up one by one to the reader, in order to form for him a picture of the whole, is nothing but an invasion of the painter's sphere by the poet, who expends thereby a great deal of imagination to no purpose. Still, as two friendly, reasonable neighbours will not at all permit that one of them shall make too free with the most intimate concerns of the other, yet will exercise in things of less importance a mutual forbearance and on either side condone trifling interferences with one's strict rights to which circumstances may give occasion, so it is with Painting and Poetry.

It is unnecessary here for my purpose to point out that in great historical pictures the single moment is almost always amplified to some extent, and that there is perhaps no single composition very rich in figures where every figure has completely the movement and posture which at the moment of the main action it ought to have; one is earlier, another later, than historical truth would require. This is a liberty which the master must make good by certain niceties of arrangement, by the employment or the withdrawal of his *personæ*, such as will permit them to take a greater or a smaller share in what is passing at the moment. Let me here avail myself of but one remark which Herr Mengs has made concerning the drapery of Raphael. "All folds," he says, "have with him their reasons, it may be from their own weight or by the pulling of the limbs. We can often see from them how they have been at an earlier moment; even in this Raphael seeks significance. One sees from the folds whether a leg or an arm, before the moment depicted, has stood in front or behind, whether the limb has moved from curvature to extension, or after being stretched out is now bending." It is undeniable that the artist in this case brings two different moments into one. For as the foot which has rested behind and now moves forward is immediately followed by the part of the dress resting upon it, unless the dress be of very stiff material and for that very reason is altogether

inconvenient to paint, so there is no moment in which the dress makes a fold different in the slightest from that which the present position of the limb demands; but if we permit it to make another fold, then we have the previous moment of the dress and the present moment of the limb. Nevertheless, who will be so particular with the artist who finds his advantage in showing us these two moments together? Who will not rather praise him for having the intelligence and the courage to commit a fault so trifling in order to attain a greater perfection of expression?

The poet is entitled to equal indulgence. His progressive imitation properly allows him to touch but one single side, one single property of his physical subject at a time. But if the happy construction of his language permits him to do this with a single word, why should he not also venture now and then to add a second such word? Why not even, if it is worth the trouble, a third? Or, indeed, perhaps a fourth? I have said that to Homer a ship was either the black ship, or the hollow ship, or the swift ship, or at most the well-rowed black ship. This is to be understood of his manner in general. Here and there a passage occurs where he adds the third descriptive epithet: Καμπύλα κύκλα, χάλκεα, ὀκτάκνημα, round, brazen, eight-spoked wheels. Even the fourth ἀσπίδα πάντοσε ἴσην, καλήν, χαλκείην, ἐξήλατον, a completely polished, beautiful, brazen, chased shield. Who will blame him for that? Who will not rather owe him thanks for this little exuberance, when he feels what an excellent effect it may have in a suitable place?

I am unwilling, however, to argue the poet's or the painter's proper justification from the simile I have employed, of the two friendly neighbours. A mere simile proves and justifies nothing. But they must be justified in this way: just as in the one case, with the painter, the two distinct moments touch each other so closely and immediately that they may without offence count as but one, so also in the other case, with the poet, the several strokes for the different parts and properties in space succeed each other so quickly, in such a crowded moment, that we can believe we hear all of them at once.

And in this, I may remark, his splendid language served Homer marvellously. It allowed him not merely all possible freedom in the combining and heaping-up of epithets, but it had, too, for their heaped-up epithets an order so happy as quite to remedy the disadvantage arising from the suspension of their application. In one or several of these facilities the

modern languages are universally lacking. Those, like the French, which, to give an example, for *καμπύλα κύκλα, χάλυα, ὀκτάκνημα*, must use the circumlocution "the round wheels which were of brass and had eight spokes," express the sense, but destroy the picture. The sense, moreover, is here nothing, and the picture everything, and the former without the latter makes the most vivid poet the most tedious babbler—a fate that has frequently befallen our good Homer under the pen of the conscientious Madame Dacier. Our German tongue, again, can, it is true, generally translate the Homeric epithets by epithets equivalent and just as terse, but in the advantageous order of them it cannot match the Greek. We say, indeed, "*Die runden, ehernen, achtspeichigten*"; but "*Räder*" trails behind. Who does not feel that three different predicates, before we know the subject, can make but a vague and confused picture? The Greek joins the subject and the first predicate immediately, and lets the others follow after; he says, "*Runde Räder, eherne, achtspeichigte*." So we know at once of what he is speaking, and are made acquainted, in consonance with the natural order of thought, first with the thing and then with its accidents. This advantage our language does not possess. Or, shall I say, possesses it and can only very seldom use it without ambiguity? The two things are one. For when we would place the epithets after, they must stand *in statu absoluto*; we must say, "*Runde Räder, ehern und achtspeichigt*." But in this *status* our adjectives are exactly like adverbs, and must, if we attach them as such to the next verb which is predicated of the thing, produce a meaning not seldom wholly false, and, at best, invariably ambiguous.

But here I am dwelling on trifles, and seem to have forgotten the Shield—Achilles' Shield, that famous picture in respect of which especially Homer was from of old regarded as a teacher of painting. A shield, people will say—that is surely a single physical object, the description of which and its parts ranged side by side is not permissible to a poet? And this particular Shield, in its material, in its form, in all the figures that covered the vast surface of it, Homer has described in more than a hundred splendid verses, with such exactness and detail that it has been easy for modern artists to make a replica of it alike in every feature.

To this special objection I reply, that I have replied to it already. Homer, that is to say, paints the Shield not as a finished and complete thing, but as a thing in process. Here

once more he has availed himself of the famous artifice, turning the *co-existing* of his design into a *consecutive*, and thereby making of the tedious painting of a physical object the living picture of an action. We see not the Shield, but the divine artificer at work upon it. He steps up with hammer and tongs to his anvil, and after he has forged the plates from the rough ore, the pictures which he has selected for its adornment stand out one after another before our eyes under his artistic chiseling. Nor do we lose sight of him again until all is finished. When it is complete, we are amazed at the work, but it is with the believing amazement of an eye-witness who has seen it in the making.

The same cannot be said of the Shield of Æneas in Virgil. The Roman poet either did not realise the subtlety of his model here, or the things that he wanted to put upon his Shield appeared to him to be of a kind that could not well admit of being shown in execution. They were prophecies, which could not have been uttered by the god in our presence as plainly as the poet afterwards expounds them. Prophecies, as such, demand an obscurer language, in which the actual names of persons yet-to-be may not fitly be pronounced. Yet these veritable names, to all appearance, were the most important things of all to the poet and courtier. If, however, this excuses him, it does not remove the unhappy effect of his deviation from the Homeric way. Readers of any delicacy of taste will justify me here. The preparations which Vulcan makes for his labour are almost the same in Virgil as in Homer. But instead of what we see in Homer—that is to say, not merely the preparations for the work, but also the work itself—Virgil after he has given us a general view of the busy god with his Cyclops :—

Ingentem clypeum informant. . . .
. . . Alii ventosis foliis auras
Accipiunt redduntque, alii stridentia tingunt
Aera lacu. Gemit impositis incudibus antrum.
Illi inter sese multa vi brachia tollunt
In numerum, versantque tenaci forcepe massam—

drops the curtain at once and transports us to another scene, bringing us gradually into the valley where Venus arrives at Æneas' side with the armour that has meanwhile been completed. She leans the weapons against the trunk of an oak-tree, and when the hero has sufficiently gazed at, and admired, and touched and tested them, the description of the pictures on the Shield begins, and, with the everlasting: "Here is," "and

there is," "near by stands," and "not far off one sees," becomes so frigid and tedious that all the poetic ornament which Virgil could give it was needed to prevent us finding it unendurable. Moreover, as this picture is not drawn by Æneas as one who rejoices in the mere figures and knows nothing of their significance :—

. . . *rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet* ;

nor even by Venus, although conceivably she must know just as much of the future fortunes of her dear grandchildren as the obliging goodman ; but proceeds from the poet's own mouth, the progress of the action meanwhile is obviously at a standstill. No single one of his characters takes any share in it ; nor does anything represented on the Shield have any influence, even the smallest, on what is to follow ; the witty courtier shines out everywhere, trimming up his matter with every kind of flattering allusion, but not the great genius, depending on the proper inner vitality of his work and despising all extraneous expedients for lending it interest. The Shield of Æneas is consequently a sheer interpolation, simply and only intended to flatter the national pride of the Romans, a foreign tributary which the poet leads into his main stream in order to give it a livelier motion. The Shield of Achilles, on the other hand, is a rich natural outgrowth of the fertile soil from which it springs ; for a Shield had to be made, and as the needful thing never comes bare and without grace from the hands of the divinity, the Shield had also to be embellished. But the art was, to treat these embellishments merely as such, to inweave them into the stuff, in order to show them to us only by means of the latter ; and this could only be done by Homer's method. Homer lets Vulcan elaborate ornaments because he is to make a Shield that is worthy of himself. Virgil, on the other hand, appears to let him make the Shield for the sake of its ornaments, considering them important enough to be particularly described, after the Shield itself has long been finished.

XIX

The objections which the elder Scaliger, Perrault, Terrasson, and others make to the Shield in Homer are well known. Equally well known is the reply which Dacier, Boivin, and Pope made to them. In my judgment, however, the latter go too far, and, relying on their good cause, introduce arguments

that are not only indefensible, but contribute little to the poet's justification.

In order to meet the main objection—that Homer has crowded the Shield with a multitude of figures such as could not possibly find room within its circumference—Boivin undertook to have it drawn, with a note of the necessary dimensions. His notion of the various concentric circles is very ingenious, although the words of the poet give not the slightest suggestion of it, whilst, furthermore, not a trace of proof is to be found that the ancients possessed shields divided off in this manner. Seeing that Homer himself calls it *σάκος πάντοσε δεδαίδαλμένον*—a shield artfully wrought upon all sides—I would rather, in order to reserve more room, have taken in aid the concave surface; for it is well known that the ancient artists did not leave this vacant, as the Shield of Minerva by Phidias proves. Yet it was not even enough for Boivin to decline availing himself of this advantage; he further increased without necessity the representations themselves for which he was obliged to provide room in the space thus diminished by half, separating into two or three distinct pictures what in the poet is obviously a single picture only. I know very well what moved him to do so, but it ought not to have moved him; instead of troubling himself to give satisfaction to the demands of his opponents, he should have shown them that their demands were illegitimate.

I shall be able to make my meaning clearer by an example. When Homer says of the one City:—

Λαοὶ δ' εἰν ἀγορῇ ἔσαν ἀθρόοι· ἔνθα δὲ νεῖκος
 ὦρῳρει, δύο δ' ἄνδρες ἐνείκεον εἵνεκα ποινῆς
 Ἀνδρὸς ἀποφθιμένου· ὁ μὲν εὖχετο πάντ' ἀποδοῦναι
 Δῆμῳ πιφάυσκων, ὁ δ' ἀνείνετο μηδὲν ἐλέσθαι·
 Ἀμφὼ δ' ἰέσθην ἐπὶ Ἱστορίᾳ πεῖραρ ἐλέσθαι.
 Λαοὶ δ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἐπήτυον, ἀμφίς ἄρωγοί·
 Κήρυκες δ' ἄρα λαὸν ἐρήτυον· οἱ δὲ γέροντες
 Ἦατ' ἐπὶ ξεστοῖσι λίθοις ἱερῶ' ἐνὶ κύκλῳ,
 Σκῆπτρα δὲ κηρύκων ἐν χερσὶ ἔχον ἡεροφώνων·
 Τοῖσιν ἔπειτ' ἦισσον, ἀμοιβηδὶς δὲ δικάζον.
 Κεῖτο δ' ἄρ' ἐν μέσσοισι δῶα χρυσοῖο τάλαντα—

he is not then, in my view, trying to sketch more than a single picture—the picture of a public lawsuit on the questionable satisfaction of a heavy fine for the striking of a death-blow. The artist who would carry out this sketch cannot in any single

effort avail himself of more than a single moment of the same; either the moment of the arraignment, or of the examination of witnesses, or of the sentence, or whatever other moment, before or after, he considers the most suitable. This single moment he makes as pregnant as possible, and endows it with all the illusions which art commands (art, rather than poetry) in the representation of visible objects. Surpassed so greatly on this side, what can the poet who is to paint this very design in words, and has no wish entirely to suffer shipwreck—what can he do but in like manner avail himself of his own peculiar advantages? And what are these? The liberty to enlarge on what has preceded and what follows the single moment of the work of art, and the power thus to show us not only that which the artist has shown, but also that which he can only leave us to guess. By this liberty and this power alone the poet draws level with the artist, and their works are then likeliest to each other when the effect of each is equally vivid, and not when the one conveys to the soul through the ear neither more nor less than the other can represent to the eye. This is the principle that should have guided Boivin in judging this passage in Homer; he would then not so much have made distinct pictures out of it as have observed in it distinct moments of time. True, he could not well have united in a single picture all that Homer tells us; the accusation and the defence, the production of witnesses, the acclamations of the divided people, the effort of the heralds to allay the tumult, and the decisions of the judge, are things which follow each other and cannot subsist side by side. Yet what, in the language of the schools, was not *actu* contained in the picture lay in it *virtute*, and the only true way of copying in words a material painting is this—to unite the latter with the actually visible, and refuse to be bound by the limits of art, within which the poet can indeed reckon up the *data* for a picture, but never produce the picture itself.

Just so is it when Boivin divides the picture of the besieged city into three different tableaux. He might just as well have divided it into twelve as into three. For as he did not at all grasp the spirit of the poet, and required him to be subject to the unities of the material painting, he might have found far more violations of these unities, so that it had almost been necessary to assign to every separate stroke of the poet a separate section of the Shield. But, in my opinion, Homer has not altogether more than ten distinct pictures upon the entire Shield, every one of which he introduces with the phrases ἐν μὲν ἔτευδε,

οὐ ἐν δὲ ποίησε, οὐ ἐν δ' ἐτίθει, οὐ ἐν δὲ ποικίλλε 'Αμφιγυῆς. Where these introductory words do not occur one has no right to suppose a separate picture; on the contrary, all which they unite must be regarded as a single picture to which there is merely wanting the arbitrary concentration in a single point of time—a thing the poet was in nowise constrained to indicate. Much rather, had he indicated it, had he confined himself strictly to it, had he not admitted the smallest feature which in the actual execution could not be combined with it—in a word, had he managed the matter exactly as his critics demand, it is true that then these gentlemen would have found nothing to set down against him, but indeed neither would a man of taste have found anything to admire.

Pope was not only pleased with Boivin's plan of dividing and designing, but thought of doing something else of his own, by now further showing that each of these dismembered pictures was planned according to the strictest rules of painting as it is practised to-day. Contrast, perspective, the three unities—all these he found observed in the best manner possible. And this, although he certainly was well aware that, according to the testimony of quite trustworthy witnesses, painting in the time of the Trojan War was still in its cradle, so that either Homer must, by virtue of his god-like genius, not so much have adhered to what painting then or in his own time could perform, as, rather, to have divined what painting in general was capable of performing, or even those witnesses themselves cannot be so trustworthy that they should be preferred to the ocular demonstration of the artistic Shield itself. The former anyone may believe who will; of the latter at least no one can be persuaded who knows something more of the history of art than the mere data of historians. For, that painting in Homer's day was still in its infancy, he believes not merely because a Pliny or such another says so, but above all because he judges from the works of art which the ancients esteemed that many centuries later they had not got much further; he knows, for instance, that the paintings of Polygnotus are far from standing the test which Pope believes would be passed by the pictures on the Shield of Homer. The two great works at Delphi of the master just mentioned, of which Pausanias has left us so circumstantial a description, are obviously without any perspective. This division of the art was entirely unknown to the ancients, and what Pope adduces in order to prove that Homer had already some conception of it, proves nothing more than

that Pope's own conception of it was extremely imperfect. "Homer," he says, "can have been no stranger to perspective, because he expressly mentions the distance of one object from another. He remarks, for instance, that the spies were set a little further off than the other figures, and that the oak-tree under which the meal was prepared for the reapers stood apart. What he says of the valley dotted over with flocks and cottages and stables is manifestly the description of a wide region seen in perspective. A general argument on the point may also certainly be drawn from the multitude of figures on the Shield, which could not all be represented in their full size; from which, therefore, we may unquestionably conclude that the art of reducing by perspective was in that age already well known." The mere observation of the optical experience that a thing appears smaller at a distance than close at hand, is far indeed from giving perspective to a picture. Perspective demands a single viewpoint, a definite natural field of vision, and it was this that was wanting in ancient paintings. The base in the pictures of Polygnotus was not horizontal, but towards the background raised so prodigiously that the figures which should appear to stand behind one another appeared to stand above one another. And if this arrangement of the different figures and their groups were general, as may be inferred from the ancient bas-reliefs, where the hindmost always stand higher than the foremost and look over their heads, then it is natural that we should take it for granted also in Homer's description, and not separate them unnecessarily from those of his pictures that can be combined in one picture. The twofold scene of the peaceful city through whose streets went the joyous crowd of a wedding-party, whilst in the market-place a great lawsuit was being decided, demands according to this no twofold picture, and Homer certainly was able to consider it a single one, representing to himself the entire city from so high a point of vision that it gave him a free and simultaneous prospect both of the streets and the market-place.

I am of opinion that the knowledge of true perspective in painting was only arrived at incidentally in the painting of scenery, and also that when this was already in its perfection, it yet cannot have been so easy to apply its rules to a single canvas, seeing that we still find in later paintings amongst the antiquities of Herculaneum many and diverse faults of perspective such as we should nowadays hardly forgive to a schoolboy.

But I absolve myself from the trouble of collecting my scattered notes concerning a point on which I may hope to receive the fullest satisfaction in Herr Winckelmann's promised history of art.

XX

I rather turn gladly to my own road, if a rambler can be said to have a road.

What I have said of physical objects in general is even more pertinent to beautiful physical objects. Physical beauty arises from the harmonious effect of manifold parts that can be taken in at one view. It demands also that these parts shall subsist side by side; and as things whose parts subsist side by side are the proper subject of painting, so it, and it alone, can imitate physical beauty. The poet, who can only show the elements of beauty one after another, in succession, does on that very account forbear altogether the description of physical beauty, as beauty. He recognises that those elements, arranged in succession, cannot possibly have the effect which they have when placed side by side, that the concentrating gaze which we would direct upon them immediately after their enumeration still affords us no harmonious picture, that it passes the human imagination to represent to itself what kind of effect this mouth, and this nose, and these eyes together have if one cannot recall from Nature or art a similar composition of such features.

Here, too, Homer is the pattern of all patterns. He says: "Nireus was beautiful; Achilles was more beautiful still; Helen possessed a divine beauty." But nowhere does he enter upon the more circumstantial delineation of those beauties. For all that, the poem is based on the beauty of Helen. How greatly would a modern poet have luxuriated in the theme!

True, a certain Constantinus Manasses tried to adorn his bald chronicle with a picture of Helen. I must thank him for the attempt. For really I should hardly know where else I could get hold of an example from which it might more obviously appear how foolish it is to venture something which Homer has so wisely forborne. When I read in him, for example:—

Ἦν ἡ γυνὴ περικαλλῆς, εὐόφρος, εὐχρυστάτη,
 Εὐπάρειος, εὐπρόσωπος, βοῶπις, χιονόχρους,
 Ἐλικοβλέφαρος, ἄβρά, χαρίτων γέμον ἄλσος,
 Λευκοβραχίων, τρυφερά, κάλλος ἀντικρυς ἔμπνουν,

Τὸ πρόσωπον κατάλευκον, ἡ παρεὶὰ ῥοδόχρους,
 Τὸ πρόσωπον ἐπίχαρι, τὸ βλέφαρον ὥραϊον,
 Κάλλος ἀνεπιτήδευτον, ἀβάπτιστον, αὐτόχρουν,
 Ἐβαπτε τὴν λευκότητα ῥοδόχροια πυρίνη,
 Ὡς εἴ τις τὸν ἐλέφαντα βάψει λαμπρᾷ πορφύρᾳ
 Δειρὴ μακρά, κατάλευκος, ὅθεν ἐμυθουργήθη
 Κυκνογενὴ τὴν εὐοπτον Ἑλένην χρηματίζειν—

then I imagine I see stones rolling up a mountain, from which at the top a splendid picture is to be constructed, the stones, however, all rolling down of themselves on the other side. What kind of picture does it leave behind—this torrent of words? What was Helen like, then? Will not, if a thousand men read this, every man of the thousand make for himself his own conception of her?

Still, it is certain the political verses of a monk are not poetry. Let us therefore hear Ariosto, when he describes his enchanting Alcina —

*Di persona era tanto ben formata,
 Quanto mai finger san pittori industri :
 Con bionda chioma, lunga e annodata,
 Oro non è, che pur risplenda, e lustro,
 Spargeasi per la guancia delicata
 Misto color di rose e di ligustri
 Di terso avorio era la fronte lieta,
 Che lo spazio finiva con giusta meta.*

*Sotto due negri, e sottilissimi archi
 Son due negri occhi, anzi due chiari soli,
 Pietosi à riguardar, à mover parchi,
 Intorno à cui par ch' Amor scherzi, e volti,
 E ch' indà tutta la faretra scarchi,
 E che visibilmente i cori involti
 Quindi il naso per mezzo il viso scende
 Che non trova l'invidia ove l'emende.*

*Sotto quel sta, quasi fra due valette,
 La bocca sparsa di nativo cinabro,
 Quivi due filze son di perle elette,
 Che chiude, ed apre un bello e dolce labro ;
 Quindi escon le cortesì parolette,
 Da render molle ogni cor rozo e scabro ;
 Quivi si forma quel soave riso
 Ch' apre a sua posta in terra il paradiso.*

*Bianca neve è il bel collo, e'l petto latte,
 Il collo è tondo, il petto colmo e largo ;
 Due pome acerbe, e pur d'avorio fatte,
 Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo,*

*Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte.
Non potria l'altre parti veder Argo,
Ben si può giudicar, che corrisponde,
A quel ch' appar di fuor, quel che s'asconde*

*Mostran le braccia sua misura giusta,
Et la candida man spesso si vede,
Lunghetta alquanto, e di larghezza angusta,
Dove nè nodo appar, nè vena eccede.
Si vede al fin de la persona angusta
Il breve, ascritto e ritondetto piede.
Gli angelici sembianzi nati in cielo
Non si ponno celar sotto alcun velo.*

Milton says of the building of Pandemonium: "Some praised the work, others the master of the work" The praise of the one, then, is not always the praise of the other. A work of art may deserve all applause while nothing very special redounds from it to the credit of the artist. On the other hand, an artist may justly claim our admiration even when his work does not completely satisfy us. If we do not forget this, quite contradictory verdicts may often be reconciled. The present case is an instance. Dolce in his dialogue on Painting puts in Ariosto's mouth an extravagant eulogy of Ariosto on the strength of these stanzas just cited; and I, on the contrary, choose them as an example of a picture that is no picture. We are both right. Dolce admires in it the knowledge which the poet displays of physical beauty, but I look merely to the effect which this knowledge, expressed in words, produces on my imagination. Dolce argues, from that knowledge, that good poets are also good painters, and I, from the effect, that what painters can by line and colour best express can only be badly expressed by words. Dolce commends Ariosto's delineation to all painters as the most perfect model of a beautiful woman, and I commend it to all poets as the most instructive warning against attempting even more unfortunately what failed in the hands of an Ariosto. It may be that, when Ariosto says —

*Di persona era tanto ben formata,
Quanto mai finger san pittori industri—*

he proves thereby that he perfectly understood the theory of proportions as only the most diligent artist can gather it from Nature and from antiquity. He may, who knows? in the mere words.—

*Spargeasi per la guancia delicata
Misto color di rose e di ligustri—*

show himself the most perfect of colourists, a very Titian. One might also, from the fact that he only compares Alcina's hair with gold but does not call it golden hair, argue as cogently that he disapproves the use of actual gold in laying on the colour. One may even find in his "descending nose".—

Quindi il naso per mezo il viso scende—

the profile of those ancient Greek noses, copied also by Roman artists from the Greeks. What good is all this erudition and insight to us his readers who want to have the picture of a beautiful woman, who want to feel something of the soft excitement of the blood which accompanies the actual sight of beauty? If the poet is aware what conditions constitute a beautiful form, do we too, therefore, share his knowledge? And if we did also know it, does he here make us aware of those conditions? Or does he in the least lighten for us the difficulty of recalling them in a vividly perceptible manner? A brow in its most graceful lines and limits :—

*. . . la fronte
Che lo spazio finia con giusta meta ;*

a rose in which envy itself can find nothing to improve :—

Che non trova l'invidia, ove l'emende ;

a hand somewhat long and rather slender :—

Lunghetta alquanto, e di larghezza angusta

what kind of picture do we gather from these general formulas? In the mouth of a drawing-master who is calling his pupils' attention to the beauties of the school model they might perhaps be useful; for by a glance at the model they perceive the pleasing lines of the delightful brow, the exquisite modelling of the nose, the slenderness of the dainty hand. But in the poet I see nothing, and feel with vexation how vain is my best effort to see what he is describing.

In this particular, where Virgil can best imitate Homer by forbearing action altogether, Virgil, too, has been rather happy. His Dido also is to him nothing further than *pulcherrima Dido*. If indeed he describes anything of her more circumstantially, it is her rich jewelry, her splendid attire :—

*Tandem progreditur . . .
Sedoniam picto chlamydem circumdata limbo
Cui pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum,
Aurea purpuream subnecti fibula vestem.*

If we on that account would apply to him what the ancient artist said to a pupil who had painted a Helen in elaborate finery—"As you are not able to paint her beautiful, you have painted her rich"—then Virgil would answer, "It is no fault of mine that I cannot paint her beautiful; the blame rests on the limits of my art; be mine the praise, to have remained within those limits."

I must not forget here the two songs of Anacreon in which he analyses for us the beauty of his beloved and of his Bathyllus. The turn he gives it there makes everything right. He imagines a painter before him, and sets him to work under his eye. So, he says, fashion me the hair, so the brow, so the eyes, so the mouth, so neck and bosom, so the hips and hands! Of what the artist can put together only part by part the poet can only set a copy in the same way. His purpose is not that we shall recognise and feel in this verbal instruction of the painter the whole beauty of the beloved subject; he himself feels the insufficiency of the verbal expression, and for this very reason calls to his aid the expressive power of art, the illusion of which he so greatly heightens that the whole song appears to be more a hymn to Art than to his beloved. He does not see the image, he sees herself and believes that she is just about to open her lips in speech.—

Ἀπέχει βλέπω γὰρ αὐτήν,
Τάχα, κηρέ, καὶ λαλήσεις.

In the sketch, too, of Bathyllus the praise of the beautiful boy is so inwoven with praise of art and the artist that it is doubtful for whose honour Anacreon really intended the poem. He collects the most beautiful parts from various paintings in which the particular beauty of these parts was its characteristic feature; the neck he takes from an Adonis, breast and hands from a Mercury, the hips from a Pollux, the abdomen from a Bacchus; till he sees the whole Bathyllus in a perfect Apollo:—

Μετὰ δὲ πρόσωπον ἔστω,
Τὸν Ἀδώνιδος παρελθών,
Ἐλεφάντινος τράχηλος
Μεταμάζιον δὲ ποίει
Διδύμας τε χειῖρας Ἑρμοῦ,
Πολυδεύκους δὲ μηρούς,
Διονυσίην δὲ νηδὺν . . .
Τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα δὲ τοῦτον
Καθελὼν ποίει Βάθυλλον.

Similarly also Lucian does not know how to give us a conception of the beauty of Panthea except by reference to the finest female statues of ancient artists. And what is this but to confess that language by itself is here powerless, that poetry stammers and eloquence is dumb where Art does not in some measure serve them as interpreter?

XXI

But does not Poetry lose too much if we take from her all pictures of physical beauty? Who wishes to do so? If we seek to close to her one single road, on which she hopes to achieve such pictures by following in the footsteps of a sister art, where she stumbles painfully without ever attaining the same goal, do we, then, at the same time close to her every other road, where Art in her turn can but follow at a distance?

Even Homer, who with evident intention refrains from all piecemeal delineation of physical beauties, from whom we can scarcely once learn in passing that Helen had white arms and beautiful hair—even he knows how, nevertheless, to give us such a conception of her beauty as far outpasses all that Art in this respect can offer. Let us recall the passage where Helen steps into the assembly of the Elders of the Trojan people. The venerable old men looked on her, and one said to the other :—

Οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ ἑκινήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς
Τοιῇδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν·
Αἰνῶς ἀθανάτησι θεῇς εἰς ὧπα ἔοικεν

What can convey a more vivid idea of Beauty than to have frigid age confessing her well worth the war that has cost so much blood and so many tears? What Homer could not describe in its component parts, he makes us feel in its working. Paint us, then, poet, the satisfaction, the affection, the love, the delight, which beauty produces, and you have painted beauty itself. Who can imagine as ill-favoured the beloved object of Sappho, the very sight of whom she confesses robbed her of her senses and her reason? Who does not fancy he beholds with his own eyes the fairest, most perfect form, as soon as he sympathises with the feeling which nothing but such a form can awaken? Not because Ovid shows us the beautiful body of his Lesbia part by part :—

*Quos humeros, quales videri tetigique lacertos !
 Forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi !
 Quam castigato planus sub pectore venter !
 Quantum et quale latus ! quam juvenile femur !—*

but because he does so with the voluptuous intoxication in which it is so easy to awaken our longing, we imagine ourselves enjoying the same sight of exquisite beauty which he enjoyed.

Another way in which poetry in its turn overtakes art in delineation of physical beauty is by transmuting beauty into charm. Charm is beauty in motion, and just for that reason less suitable to the painter than to the poet. The painter can only help us to guess the motion, but in fact his figures are motionless. Consequently grace with him is turned into grimace. But in poetry it remains what it is—a transitory beauty which we want to see again and again. It comes and goes; and as we can generally recall a movement more easily and more vividly than mere forms and colours, charm can in such a case work more powerfully on us than beauty. All that still pleases and touches us in the picture of Alcina is charm. The impression her eyes make does not come from the fact that they are dark and passionate, but rather that they :—

Pietosi à riguardar, à mover parca—

look round her graciously and are gentle rather than flashing in their glances; that Love flutters about them and from them empties all his quiver. Her mouth delights us, not because lips tinted with cinnobar enclose two rows of choicest pearls; but because there the lovely smile is shaped which in itself seems to open up an earthly paradise; because from it the friendly words come forth that soften the most savage breast. Her bosom enchants us, less because milk and ivory and apples typify its whiteness and delicate forms than because we see it softly rise and fall, like the waves at the margin of the shore when a playful zephyr contends with the ocean :—

*Due pome acerbi, e pur d'avorio fatte
 Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo,
 Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte.*

I am sure such features of charm by themselves, condensed into one or two stanzas, will do more than all the five into which Ariosto has spun them out, inweaving them with frigid details of the fair form, far too erudite for our appreciation.

Even Anacreon himself would rather fall into the apparent

impropriety of demanding impossibilities from the painter than leave the picture of his beloved untouched with charm :—

Τρυφεροῦ δ' ἔσω γενείου,
Περὶ λυγδίνῳ τραχήλῳ
Χάριτες πέτοιιντο πᾶσαι.

Her chin of softness, her neck of marble—let all the Graces hover round them, he bids the artist. And how? In the exact and literal sense? That is not capable of any pictorial realisation. The painter could give the chin the most exquisite curve, the prettiest dimple, *Amoris digitulo impressum* (for the ἔσω appears to me to signify a dimple), he could give the neck the most beautiful carnation; but he can do no more. The turning of this fair neck, the play of the muscles, by which that dimple is now more visible, now less, the peculiar charm, all are beyond his powers. The poet said the utmost by which his art could make beauty real to us, so that the painter also might strive for the utmost expression in his art. A fresh example of the principle already affirmed—that the poet even when he speaks of works of art is not bound in his descriptions to confine himself within the limits of art.

XXII

Zeuxis painted a Helen and had the courage to set under it those famous lines of Homer in which the enchanted Elders confess their emotions. Never were painting and poetry drawn into a more equal contest. The victory remained undecided, and both deserved to be crowned. For, just as the wise poet showed beauty merely in its effect, which he felt he could not delineate in its component parts, so did the no less wise painter show us beauty by nothing else than its component parts and hold it unbecoming to his art to resort to any other method. His picture consisted in the single figure of Helen, standing in naked beauty. For it is probable that it was the very Helen which he painted for her of Crotona

Let us compare with this, for wonder's sake, the painting which Caylus sketches from Homer's lines for the benefit of a modern artist: "Helen, covered with a white veil, appears in the midst of an assemblage of old men, in whose ranks Priam also is to be found, recognisable by the signs of his royal dignity. It must be the artist's business to make evident to us the

triumph of beauty in the eager gaze and in the expression of amazed admiration on the faces of the sober greybeards. The scene is by one of the gates of the city. The background of the painting thus can lose itself in the open sky or against the city's lofty walls; the former were the bolder conception, but one is as fitting as the other."

Let us imagine this picture carried out by the greatest master of our time and place it against the work of Zeuxis. Which will show the real triumph of beauty? That in which I myself feel it, or this where I must argue it from the grimaces of the susceptible greybeards? *Turpe senilis amor*; a lustful look makes the most venerable countenance ridiculous; an old man who betrays youthful passions is really a loathsome object. This objection cannot be made to the Homeric elders; for the emotion they feel is a momentary spark which their wisdom extinguishes immediately; intended only to do honour to Helen, but not to disgrace themselves. They confess their feeling and forthwith add—

Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς, τοίη περ ἔοῦσ', ἐν νηυσὶ νεέσθω,
Μηδ' ἡμῖν τεκέεσσι τ' ὀπίσσω πῆμα λίποιτο

Without this resolution they would be old coxcombs, what, indeed, they appear in the picture of Caylus. And on what, then, do they direct their greedy glances? On a masked and veiled figure! That is Helen, is it? Inconceivable to me how Caylus here can leave the veil. Homer, indeed, gives it her expressly:—

Αὐτίκα δ' ἀργεννήσι καλυψαμένη ὀθόνησιν
'Ωρμᾶτ' ἐκ θαλάμοιο . . .

but it is to cross the streets in it; and if indeed with Homer the elders already betray their admiration before she appears to have again taken off or thrown back the veil, it was not then the first time the old men saw her; their confession therefore might not arise from the present momentary view: they may have already often felt what on this occasion they first confessed themselves to feel. In the painting nothing like this occurs. If I see here enchanted old men, I wish at the same time to see what it is that charms them; and I am surprised in the extreme when I perceive nothing further than, as we have said, a masked and veiled figure on which they are passionately gazing. What is here of Helen? Her white veil and something of her well-proportioned outline so far as outline can become

visible beneath raiment. Yet perhaps it was not the Count's intention that her face should be covered, and he names the veil merely as a part of her attire. If this is so—his words, indeed, are hardly capable of such an interpretation: "*Hélène couverte d'un voile blanc*"—then another surprise awaits me; he is so particular in commending to the artist the expression on the faces of the elders, but on the beauty of Helen's face he does not expend a syllable. This modest beauty, in her eyes the dewy shimmer of a remorseful tear, approaching timidly! What! Is supreme beauty something so familiar to our artists that they do not need to be reminded of it? Or is expression more than beauty? And are we in pictures, too, accustomed, as on the stage, to let the homeliest actress pass for a charming princess, if only her prince declares warmly enough the love he bears her?

In truth, Caylus' picture would bear the same relation to that of Zeuxis as burlesque does to the loftiest poetry.

Homer was, without doubt, read in former times more diligently than to-day. Yet one finds ever so many pictures unmentioned which the ancient artists would have drawn from his pages. Only of the poet's hint at particular physical beauties they do appear to have made diligent use; these they did paint, and in such subjects alone, they understood well enough, it was granted them to compete with the poet. Besides Helen, Zeuxis also painted Penelope, and the Diana of Apelles was the Homeric Diana in company of her nymphs. I may here call to mind that the passage of Pliny in which the latter is mentioned requires an emendation.* But to paint actions from Homer simply because they offer a rich composition, excellent contrasts, artistic lights, seemed to the ancient artists not to be their *métier*, nor could it be so long as art remained within the narrower limits of her own high vocation. Instead, they nourished themselves on the spirit of the poet; they filled their imagination with his most exalted characteristics; the fire of his enthusiasm kindled their own; they saw and

* Pliny says of the Apelles: *Fecit et Dianam sacrificantium virginum choro mixtam quibus vicisse Homeri versus videtur id ipsum describentis*. Nothing can be better deserved than this eulogy. Beautiful nymphs about a beautiful goddess who stands out above them with a brow of majesty make a sketch which is fitter for painting than for poetry. The *sacrificantium*, though, is to me very doubtful. What does the goddess amid sacrificial vestals? And is this the occupation which Homer gives to the playmates of Diana? Not at all! they wander with her through the woods and hills, they hunt, they sport, they dance.

felt like him; and so their works became copies of the Homeric, not in the relation of a portrait to its original, but in that of a son to his father—like, yet different. The resemblance often lies only in a single feature, the rest having amongst them all nothing alike except that they harmonise with the resembling feature in the one case as well as in the other.

As, moreover, the Homeric masterpieces in poetry were older than any masterpiece of art, as Homer had observed Nature with a painter's eye earlier than a Phidias or an Apelles, it is not to be wondered at that various observations of particular use to them the artists found already made in Homer before they themselves had had the opportunity of making them in Nature. These they eagerly seized on, in order to imitate Nature through Homer. Phidias confessed that the lines :—

Ἦ, καὶ κυανέησιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσιν νεῦσε Κρονίων
 Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος
 Κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον

served him as a model in his Olympian Jupiter, and that only by their aid did he achieve a divine countenance, *propemodum ex ipso cælo petitum*. Whosoever considers this to mean nothing more than that the fancy of the artist was fired by the poet's exalted picture, and thereby became capable of representations just as exalted—he, it seems to me, overlooks the most essential point, and contents himself with something quite general where, for a far more complete satisfaction, something very special is demanded. In my view Phidias confesses here also that in this passage he first noticed how much expression lies in the eyebrows, *quantia pars animi* is shown in them. Perhaps also it induced him to devote more attention to the hair, in order to express in some measure what Homer means by "ambrosial" locks. For it is certain that the ancient artists before the days of Phidias little understood what was significant and speaking in the countenance, and almost invariably neglected the hair. Even Myron was faulty in both these particulars, as Pliny has remarked, and after him Pythagoras Leontinus was the first who distinguished himself by the elegance of coiffure. What Phidias learned from Homer, other artists learned from the works of Phidias.

Another example of this kind I may specify which has always very much pleased me. Let us recall what Hogarth has noted concerning the Apollo Belvidere. "This Apollo," he says,

"and the Antinous are both to be seen in the same palace at Rome. If, however, the Antinous fills the spectator with admiration, the Apollo amazes him, and, indeed, as travellers have remarked, by an aspect above humanity which usually they are not capable of describing. And this effect, they say, is all the more wonderful because when one examines it, the disproportionate in it is obvious even to a common eye. One of the best sculptors we have in England, who recently went there on purpose to see this statue, corroborated what has just been said, and in particular that the feet and legs in relation to the upper part are too long and too broad. And Andreas Sacchi, one of the greatest Italian painters, seems to have been of the same opinion, otherwise he would hardly (in a famous picture now in England) have given to his Apollo, crowning the musician Pasquini, exactly the proportions of Antinous, seeing that in other respects it appears to be actually a copy of the Apollo. Although we frequently see in very great works some small part handled carelessly, this cannot be the case here. For in a beautiful statue correct proportion is one of the most essential beauties. We must conclude, therefore, that these limbs must have been purposely lengthened, otherwise it would have been easy to avoid it. If we therefore examine the beauties of this figure thoroughly, we shall with reason conclude that what we have hitherto considered indescribably excellent in its general aspect has proceeded from that which appeared to be a fault in one of its parts" (Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty*). All this is very illuminating, and I will add that in fact Homer has felt it and has pointed out that it gives a stately appearance, arising purely from this addition of size in the measurements of feet and legs. For when Antenor would compare the figure of Ulysses with that of Menelaus, he makes him say :—

Στάντων μὲν Μενέλαος ὑπείρεχεν εὐρέας ὄμους,
 "Ἀμφω δ' ἐζομένω γεραρῶτερος ἦεν Ὀδυσσεύς.

("When both stood, then Menelaus stood the higher with his broad shoulders; but when both sat, Ulysses was the statelier.") As Ulysses therefore gained stateliness in sitting, which Menelaus in sitting lost, the proportion is easy to determine which the upper body had in each to feet and legs. Ulysses was the larger in the proportions of the former, Menelaus in the proportions of the latter.

XXIII

A single defective part can destroy the harmonious working of many parts towards beauty. Yet the object does not necessarily therefore become ugly. Even ugliness demands several defective parts which likewise must be seen at one view if we are to feel by it the contrary of that with which beauty inspires us.

Accordingly, ugliness also in its essential nature would not be a reproach to poetry; and yet Homer has depicted the extremest ugliness in Thersites, and depicted it, moreover, in its elements set side by side. Why was that permitted to him with ugliness which in the case of beauty he renounced with so fine a discernment? Is the effect of ugliness not just as much hindered by the successive enumeration of its elements as the effect of beauty is nullified by the like enumeration of its elements? To be sure it is, but herein lies also Homer's justification. Just because ugliness becomes in the poet's delineation a less repulsive vision of physical imperfection, and so far as effect is concerned ceases as it were to be ugliness, it becomes usable to the poet; and what he cannot use for its own sake, he uses as an ingredient in order to produce or intensify certain mixed states of feeling with which he must entertain us in default of feelings purely pleasurable.

These mixed feelings are awakened by the laughable and the terrible. Homer makes Thersites ugly in order to make him laughable. It is not, however, merely by his ugliness that he becomes so; for ugliness is imperfection and for the laughable a contrast is required of perfection and imperfection. This is the declaration of my friend Mendelssohn, to which I should like to add that this contrast must not be too sharp or too glaring, that the *opposita* (to continue in painter's language) must be of the kind that can melt into each other. The wise and honest Æsop, even if one assigns him the ugliness of Thersites, does not thereby become laughable. It was a ridiculous monastic whim to wish the *τέλειον* of his instructive tales transferred to his own person by the help of its deformity. For a misshapen body and a beautiful soul are like oil and vinegar, which, even when they are thoroughly mixed, still remain completely separated to the palate. They afford us no *tertium quid*; the body excites disgust, the soul satisfaction, each its own for itself. Only when the misshapen body is at the same

time frail and sickly, when it hinders the soul in her operations, when it becomes the source of hurtful prepossessions against her—then indeed disgust and satisfaction mingle and flow together, but the new apparition arising therefrom is not laughter, but pity, and the object which we otherwise should merely have esteemed becomes interesting. The misshapen and sickly Pope must have been far more interesting to his friends than the sound and handsome Wycherley.—But, however little would Thersites have been made laughable by mere ugliness, just as little would he have become laughable without it. The ugliness; the harmony of this ugliness with his character; the contradiction which both make to the idea he entertains of his own importance, the harmless effect of his malicious chatter, humiliating only to himself—all must work together to this end. The last-named particular is the οὐ φθαρτικόν which Aristotle makes indispensable to the laughable, just as also my friend makes it a necessary condition that such contrast must be of no moment and must interest us but little. For let us only suppose that Thersites' malicious belittling of Agamemnon had come to cost him dear, that instead of a couple of bloody weals he must pay for it with his life—then certainly we should cease to laugh at him. For this monster of a man is yet a man, whose destruction will always seem a greater evil than all his frailties and vices. This we can learn by experience if we read his end in Quintus Calaber. Achilles laments having killed Penthesilea; the beautiful woman in her blood, so bravely poured out, commands the esteem and pity of the hero, and esteem and pity turn to love. But the slanderous Thersites makes that love a crime. He declaims against the lewdness that betrays even the most valiant man to folly —

. . . "Ἦτ' ἄφρονα φῶτα τίθησι
Καὶ πινυτόν περ ἐόντα. . .

Achilles gets into a rage, and without replying a word strikes him so roughly between cheek and ear that teeth and blood and soul together gush from his throat. Horrible unspeakably! The passionate, murderous Achilles becomes more hateful to me than the spiteful, snarling Thersites; the jubilant cry which the Greeks raise over the deed offends me. I take part with Diomedes, who draws his sword forthwith to avenge his kinsman on the murderer: for I feel, too, that Thersites is my kinsman, a human being.

But grant only that Thersites' incitements had broken out in sedition, that the mutinous people had actually taken ship and traitorously forsaken their captains, that the captains had thus fallen into the hands of a revengeful enemy, and that a divine judgment had brought utter destruction to both fleet and people. in such a case how would the ugliness of Thersites appear? If harmless ugliness can be laughable, a mischievous ugliness is always terrible. I do not know how to illustrate this better than by a couple of excellent passages of Shakspeare. Edmund, the bastard son of Earl Gloucester in *King Lear*, is no less a villain than Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who paved his way by the most detestable crimes to the throne which he ascended under the name of Richard III. How comes it, then, that the former excites far less shuddering and horror than the latter? When I hear the Bastard say :—

Thou, Nature, art my goddess, to thy law
My services are bound, wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true
As honest Madam's issue? Why brand they thus
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base!
Who in the lusty stealth of Nature take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to creating a whole tribe of fops
Got 'tween asleep and wake?—

in this I hear a devil, but I see him in the form of an angel of light. When, on the other hand, I hear the Duke of Gloucester say :—

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass,
I, that am rudely stamped and want Love's majesty,
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionably
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I (in this weak piping time of peace)
Have no delight to pass away the time;
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on my own deformity.

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair, well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain !

then I hear a devil and see a devil in a shape that only the Devil should have.

XXIV

It is thus the poet uses the ugliness of forms ; what use of them is permitted to the painter ? Painting, as imitative dexterity, can express ugliness, but painting, as beautiful art, will not express it. To her, as the former, all visible objects belong ; but, as the latter, she confines herself solely to those visible objects which awaken agreeable sensations.

But do not even the disagreeable sensations please in the imitation of them ? Not all. A sagacious critic has already made the remark concerning the sensation of disgust. "The representations of fear," he says, "of sadness, of terror, of pity and so on, can only excite discomfort in so far as we take the evil to be actual. These, therefore, can be resolved into pleasant sensations by the recollection that it is but an artistic deceit. The unpleasant sensation of disgust, however, in virtue of the laws of the imagination, ensues on the mere representation in the mind whether the subject be considered as actual or not. Of what use is it, therefore, to the offended soul if Art thus betrays herself by a surrender to imitation ? Her discomfort arose not from the foreboding that the evil was actual but from the mere presentation of the same, and this *is* actual. The sensations of disgust are therefore always nature, never imitation."

The same principle holds good of the ugliness of forms. This ugliness offends our sight, is repugnant to our taste for order and harmony, and awakens aversion without respect to the actual existence of the subject in which we perceive it. We do not want to see Thersites, either in Nature or in picture, and if in fact his picture displeases us less, this happens not for the reason that the ugliness of his form ceases in the imitation to be ugliness, but because we have the power of abstracting our attention from this ugliness and satisfying ourselves merely with the art of the painter. Yet even this satisfaction will every moment be interrupted by the reflection how ill the art has been bestowed, and this reflection will seldom fail to be accompanied by contempt for the artist.

Aristotle suggests another reason why things on which we look in Nature with repugnance do yet afford us pleasure even in the most faithful copy—namely, the universal curiosity of mankind. We are glad if we either can learn from the copy τί ἐκαστον, what anything is, or if we can conclude from it ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος, that it is this or that. But even from this there follows no advantage to ugliness in imitation. The pleasure that arises from the satisfaction of our curiosity is momentary, and merely accidental to the subject from which it arises; the dissatisfaction, on the contrary, that accompanies the sight of ugliness is permanent, and essential to the subject that excites it. How, then, can the former balance the latter? Still less can the momentary agreeable amusement which the showing of a likeness gives us overcome the disagreeable effect of ugliness. The more closely I compare the ugly copy with the ugly original, the more do I expose myself to this effect, so that the pleasure of comparison vanishes very quickly, and there remains to me nothing more than the untoward impression of the twofold ugliness. To judge by the examples given by Aristotle, it appears as if he himself had been unwilling to reckon the ugliness of forms as amongst the unpleasing subjects which might yet please in imitation. These subjects are corpses and ravening beasts. Ravening wild beasts excite terror even though they are not ugly; and this terror, and not their ugliness, it is that is resolved into pleasant sensations by imitation. So, too, with corpses: the keener feeling of pity, the terrible reminder of our own annihilation it is that makes a corpse in Nature a repulsive subject to us; in the imitation, however, that pity loses its sharper edge by the conviction of the illusion, and from the fatal reminder an alloy of flattering circumstances can either entirely divert us, or unite so inseparably with it that we seem to find in it more of the desirable than the terrible.

As, therefore, the ugliness of forms cannot by and for itself be a theme of painting as fine art, because the feeling which it excites, while unpleasing, is not of that sort of unpleasing sensations which may be transformed into pleasing ones by imitation; yet the question might still be asked whether it could not to painting as well as to poetry be useful as an ingredient, for the intensifying of other sensations. May painting, then, avail itself of ugly forms for the arriving at the laughable and the terrible?

I will not venture to give this question a point-blank negative.

It is undeniable that harmless ugliness can even in painting be made laughable, especially when there is combined with it an affectation of charm and dignity. It is just as incontestable that mischievous ugliness does in painting, just as in Nature, excite horror, and that this laughable and this horrible element, which in themselves are mingled feelings, attain by imitation a new degree of offensiveness or of pleasure.

I must at the same time point out that, nevertheless, painting is not here completely in the same case with poetry. In poetry, as I have already remarked, the ugliness of forms does by the transmutation of their co-existing parts into successive parts lose its unpleasant effect almost entirely; from this point of view it ceases, as it were, to be ugliness, and can therefore ally itself more intimately with other appearances in order to produce a new and distinct effect. In painting, on the contrary, the ugliness has all its forces at hand, and works almost as strongly as in Nature itself. Consequently, harmless ugliness cannot well remain laughable for long; the unpleasant sensation gains the upper hand, and what was farcical to begin with becomes later merely disgusting. Nor is it otherwise with mischievous ugliness; the terrible is gradually lost and the monstrous remains alone and unchangeable.

Keeping this in view, Count Caylus was perfectly right to leave the episode of Thersites out of the list of his Homeric pictures. But are we therefore right, too, in wishing them cut out of Homer's own work? I am sorry to find that a scholar of otherwise just and fine taste is of this opinion. A fuller exposition of my own views on the matter I postpone to another opportunity.

XXV

The second distinction also, which the critic just named draws between disgust and other unpleasant emotions of the soul, is concerned with the aversion awakened within us by the ugliness of physical forms.

"Other unpleasant emotions," he says, "can often, apart from imitation and in Nature itself, gratify the mind, inasmuch as they never excite unmixed aversion, but in every case mingle their bitterness with pleasure. Our fear is seldom denuded of all hope; terror animates all our powers to evade the danger; anger is bound up with the desire to avenge ourselves, as sadness is with the agreeable representation of the happiness that

preceded it, whilst pity is inseparable from the tender feelings of love and affection. The soul is permitted to dwell now on the pleasurable, and now on the afflicting, parts of an emotion, and to make for itself a mixture of pleasure and its opposite which is more attractive than pleasure without admixture. Only a very little attention to what goes on within is needed to observe frequent instances of the kind; what else would account for the fact that to the angry man his anger, to the melancholy man his dejection, is dearer than any pleasing representations by which it is sought to quiet or cheer him? Quite otherwise is it in the case of disgust and the feelings associated with it. In that the soul recognises no noticeable admixture of pleasure. Distaste gains the upper hand, and there is therefore no situation that we can imagine either in Nature or in imitation in which the mind would not recoil with repugnance from such representations."

Perfectly true! but as the critic himself recognises yet other sensations akin to disgust which likewise produce nothing but aversion, what can be nearer akin to it than the feeling of the ugly in physical forms? This sensation also is, in Nature, without the slightest admixture of delight, and as it is just as little capable of it in imitation, so there is no situation in the latter in which the mind would not recoil with repugnance from the representation of it.

Indeed, this repugnance, if I have studied my feelings with sufficient care, is wholly of the nature of disgust. The sensation which accompanies ugliness of form is disgust, only somewhat fainter in degree. This conflicts, indeed, with another note of the critic, according to which he thinks that only the *blind* senses—taste, smell, and touch—are sensitive to disgust. "The two former," he says, "by an excessive sweetness and the third by an excessive softness of bodies that do not sufficiently resist the fibres that touch them. Such objects then become unendurable even to sight, but merely through the association of ideas that recall to us the repugnance to which they give rise in the taste, or smell, or touch. For, properly speaking, there are no objects of disgust for the vision." Yet, in my opinion, things of the kind can be named. A scar in the face, a hare-lip, a flattened nose with prominent nostrils, an entire absence of eyebrows, are uglinesses which are not offensive either to smell, taste, or touch. At the same time it is certain that these things produce a sensation that certainly comes much nearer to disgust than what we feel at sight of other deformities of body

—a crooked foot, or a high shoulder, the more delicate our temperament, the more do they cause us those inward sensations that precede sickness. Only, these sensations very soon disappear, and actual sickness can scarcely result; the reason of which is certainly to be found in this fact, that they are objects of sight, which simultaneously perceives in them and with them a multitude of circumstances through the pleasant presentation of which those unpleasing things are so tempered and obscured that they can have no noticeable effect on the body. The blind senses, on the other hand—taste, smell, and touch—cannot, when they are affected by something unpleasant, likewise take cognisance of such other circumstances; the disagreeable, consequently, works by itself and in its whole energy, and cannot but be accompanied in the body by a far more violent shock.

Moreover, the disgusting is related to imitation in precisely the same way as the ugly. Indeed, as its unpleasant effect is more violent, it can even less than the ugly be made in and for itself a subject either of poetry or painting. Only because it also is greatly modified by verbal expression, I venture still to contend that the poet might be able to use at least some features of disgust as an ingredient for the mingled sensations of which we have spoken, which he intensifies so successfully by what is ugly.

The disgusting can add to the laughable; or representations of dignity and decorum, set in contrast with the disgusting, become laughable. Instances of this kind abound in Aristophanes. The weasel occurs to me which interrupted the good Socrates in his astronomical observations :—

ΜΑΘ. Πρώην δέ γε γνώμην μεγάλην ἀφῆρέθη
 Ὑπ' ἀσκαλαβώτου. ΣΤ. Τίνα τρόπον; κάτειπέ μοι.

ΜΑΘ. Ζητούντος αὐτοῦ τῆς σελήνης τὰς ὁδοὺς
 Καὶ τὰς περιφοράς, εἰτ' ἄνω κεκηνότος
 Ἀπὸ τῆς ὀροφῆς νύκτωρ γαλεώτης κατέχεσεν.

ΣΤ. Ἦσθην γαλεώτῃ καταχέσαντι Σωκράτους.

Suppose that not to be disgusting which falls into his open mouth, and the laughable vanishes. The drollest strokes of this kind occur in the Hottentot tale, Tquassouw and Knoninquaiha in the *Connoisseur*, an English weekly magazine full of humour, ascribed to Lord Chesterfield. Everyone knows how filthy the Hottentots are and how many things they consider

beautiful and elegant and sacred which with us awaken disgust and aversion. A flattened cartilage of a nose, flabby breasts hanging down to the navel, the whole body smeared with a cosmetic of goat's fat and soot gone rotten in the sun, the hair dripping with grease, arms and legs bound about with fresh entrails—let one think of this as the object of an ardent, reverent, tender love; let one hear this uttered in the exalted language of gravity and admiration and refrain from laughter!

With the terrible it seems possible for the disgusting to be still more intimately mingled. What we call the horrible is nothing but the disgusting and terrible in one. Longinus, it is true, is displeased with the τῆς ἐκ μὲν ῥινῶν μύξαι ῥέον in Hesiod's description of melancholy; but, in my opinion, not so much because it is a disgusting trait as because it is merely a disgusting trait contributing nothing to the terrible. For the long nails extending beyond the fingers (μακροὶ δ' ὄνυχες χεῖρεςσιν ὑπῆσαν) he does not appear to find fault with. Yet long nails are not less disgusting than a running nose. But the long nails are at the same time terrible, for it is they that lacerate the cheeks until the blood runs down upon the ground.—

. . . Ἐκ δὲ παρειῶν
Αἵμ' ἀπελείβειτ' ἔραζε. . . .

A running nose, on the contrary, is nothing more than a running nose, and I only advise Melancholy to keep her mouth closed. Let one read in Sophocles the description of the vacant, barren den of the unhappy Philoctetes. There is nothing to be seen of the necessities or the conveniences of life beyond a trodden matting of withered leaves, a misshapen bowl of wood, and a fireplace. The whole wealth of the sick, forsaken man! How does the poet complete the sad and fearful picture? With an addition of disgust. "Ha!" exclaims Neoptolemus, recoiling,—"torn rags drying in the wind, full of blood and matter!"

NE. Ὅρῳ κενὴν οἴκησιν, ἀνθρώπων δίχα.
ΟΔ. Οὐδ' ἐνδον οἰκοποιός ἐστί τις τροφή;
NE. Στιπτὴ γε φύλλας ὡς ἐναυλίζοντι τῷ.
ΟΔ. Τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔρημα, κούδέν ἐσθ' ὑπόστεγον;
NE. Αὐτόξυλόν γ' ἔκλωμα, φλαυρουργοῦ τινὸς
Τεχνήματ' ἀνδρός, καὶ πυρεῖ' ὁμοῦ τάδε.
ΟΔ. Κείνου τὸ θησαύρισμα σημαίνεις τόδε.
NE. Ἴοὺ ἰοῦ καὶ ταῦτά γ' ἄλλα θάλπεται
Ῥάκη, ραρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα.

And, similarly, in Homer dead Hector, dragged along, his countenance disfigured with blood and dust and clotted hair :

Squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crines

(as Virgil expresses it), a disgusting object, but all the more terrible on that account and all the more moving. Who can think of the torture of Marsyas in Ovid without a sensation of disgust?

*Clamant cutis est summos derepta per artus,
Nec quidquam nisi vulnus erat Cruor undique manat,
Detectique patent nervi, trepidæque sine ulla
Pelle micant venæ. salientia viscera possis
Et perlucens numerare in pectore fibras.*

But who does not feel at the same time that the disgusting is here in place? It makes the terrible horrible, and the horrible itself in Nature, when our pity is engaged, is not wholly disagreeable; how much less in the imitation! I will not heap up instances. But one thing I must still note: that there is a variety of the terrible, the poet's way to which stands open simply and solely through the disgusting—this is the terrible of *hunger*. Even in common life it is impossible to express the extremity of hunger otherwise than by the narration of all the innutritious, unwholesome, and especially all the loathsome things, with which the appetite must be appeased. As the imitation can awaken in us nothing of the feeling of hunger itself, it resorts to another unpleasant feeling which in the case of the fiercest hunger we recognise as the smaller of two great evils. This feeling it seeks to excite within us in order that we may from the discomfort conclude how fearful must be that other discomfort under which this becomes of no account. Ovid says of the oread whom Ceres sent off to starve:—

*Hanc (Famem) procul ut vidit. . . .
. . . Refert mandata deæ, paulumque morata,
Quamquam aberat longe, quamquam modo venerat illuc,
Visa tamen sensisse Famem. . . .*

An unnatural exaggeration! The sight of one who hungers, were it even Hunger herself, has not this infectious power; pity and horror and disgust it may make us feel, but not hunger. This horror Ovid has not spared us in his picture of famine, and in the hunger of Erysichthon, both in his description and that of Callimachus, the loathsome features are the strongest. After Erysichthon had devoured everything, not sparing even the beast which his mother had reared to be a burnt-offering

for Vesta, Callimachus makes him fall upon horses and cats, and beg upon the streets for the crusts and filthy fragments from strange tables :—

Καὶ τὰν βῶν ἔφαγεν, τὰν Ἑστία ἔτρεφε μάτηρ,
Καὶ τὸν ἀεθλοφόρον καὶ τὸν πολεμῆιον ἵππον,
Καὶ τὰν αἰλουρον, τὰν ἔτρεμε θηρία μυκά—
Καὶ τόθ' ὁ τῷ βασιλῆος ἐνὶ τριόδοισι καθήστο
Αἰτίζων ἀκόλως τε καὶ ἐκβολὰ λύματα δαιτὸς—

And Ovid makes him finally put his teeth into his own limbs, to nourish his body with his own flesh :—

*Vix tamen illa mali postquam consumpserat omnem
Maternam. . . .
Ipse suos artus lacero disvellere morsu
Cœpit, et infelix minuendo corpus aiebat.*

For that very reason were the repulsive Harpies made so noisome, so filthy, that the hunger which their snatching of the viands was to produce should be so much more terrible. Listen to the lament of Phineus in Apollonius :—

Τυτθὸν δ' ἦν ἄρα δὴ ποτ' ἐδητύος ἄμμι λίπῳσι,
Πνεῖ τόδε μυδαλέον τε καὶ οὐ τλητὸν μένος ὀδμῆς.
Οὐδέ τίς οὐδὲ μίνυνθα βροτῶν ἄνχοιτο πελάσας
Οὐδ' εἰ οἱ ἀδάμαντος ἐληλαμένον κέαρ εἶη.
'Αλλὰ με πικρὴ δῆτ' αὖ δαιτὸς ἐπίσχει ἀνάγκη
Μίμνειν, καὶ μίμνοντα κακῇ ἐν γαστέρι θέσθαι.

I would from this point of view gladly excuse the loathsome introduction of the Harpies in Virgil; but it is no actual present hunger which they cause, but only an impending one which they prophesy, and, furthermore, the whole prophecy is resolved in the end into a play upon words. Dante, too, prepares us not only for the story of the starvation of Ugolino by the most loathsome and horrible situation in which he places him in hell with his aforetime persecutor; but the starvation itself also is not without elements of disgust, which more particularly overcomes us at the point where the sons offer themselves as food to their father. There is in a drama of Beaumont and Fletcher a passage which I might cite here in place of all other examples were I not obliged to think it somewhat overdone.

I turn to the question of disgusting subjects in painting. If it were quite incontestable that, properly speaking, there are no disgusting subjects whatever for sight, of which it might be

assumed that painting, as fine art, would refuse them : all the same, she must avoid disgusting subjects in general, because the association of ideas makes them disgusting to sight also. Pardenone in a picture of Christ's burial makes one of the onlookers hold his nose. Richardson condemns this on the ground that Christ was not yet so long dead that His body could have suffered corruption. In the Resurrection of Lazarus, on the other hand, he thinks it might be permitted to the painter to show by such an indication what the story expressly asserts—that his body was already corrupt. In my view this representation is unendurable in this case also; for not only the actual stench, but the mere idea of it awakens disgust. We flee offensive places even if we have actually a catarrh. Yet painting accepts the disgusting not for disgust's sake : she accepts it, as poetry does, in order to intensify by it the laughable and the terrible. But at her own risk ! What, however, I have in this case noted of the ugly holds yet more certainly of the disgusting. It loses in a *visible* imitation incomparably less of its effect than in an *audible* one; and therefore can mingle less intimately with the laughable and terrible elements in the former case than in the latter; as soon as the first surprise is past, as soon as the first eager glance is satisfied, it isolates itself in its turn completely and lies there in all its crudeness.

XXVI

Herr Winckelmann's *History of Ancient Art* has been issued. I will not venture a step further until I have read that work. To reason too nicely about art from mere general conceptions may lead to vagaries that sooner or later one will find confuted in works of art. The ancients, too, knew the bonds that unite poetry and painting, and they will not have drawn them tighter than is advantageous to both. What their artists did will teach me what artists in general ought to do; and where such a man carries before us the torch of history, speculation can follow boldly.

We usually dip here and there in an important work before we begin to read it seriously. My curiosity was above all things to learn the author's opinion of the Laocoon—not, indeed, of the art of the work, of which he has already spoken elsewhere, but rather of its age. On that point to which party does he adhere? To those who believe Virgil to have had the group before his

eyes, or to those who think the artists followed the poet in their work? It is very much to my liking that he is entirely silent regarding a mutual imitation. Where is the absolute necessity for that? It is not at all impossible that the resemblances between the sculpture and the poetic picture, which we have been considering, are accidental and not intentional resemblances; and that the one was so little the model of the other that they need not even have had the same kind of model before them. Nevertheless, had he supposed such an imitation to be evident, he would certainly have had to declare for the former. For he is satisfied that the Laocoon dates from the times in which art among the Greeks attained the summit of its perfection—from the time, that is to say, of Alexander the Great.

"The kind Fate," he says, "which has still kept watch over the arts, even in their destruction, has preserved for the whole world's admiration a work from this age of art, as an evidence of the truth of history regarding the splendour of so many vanished masterpieces. Laocoon with his two sons, wrought by Agesander, Apollodorus, and Athenodorus of Rhodes, is in all probability of this age, although one cannot positively determine the date, or, as some have done, declare the Olympiad in which these artists flourished."

In a note he adds: "Pliny says not a word of the time in which Agesander and his assistants in this work lived; Maffei, however, in his treatise on *Ancient Sculpture*, makes out that they flourished in the 88th Olympiad, and to this decision some others, including Richardson, have subscribed. But Maffei, in my view, has taken an Athenodorus among the pupils of Polycletus for one of our artists, and as Polycletus flourished in the 87th Olympiad, his supposed pupil has been placed an Olympiad later; other grounds Maffei can have none."

Quite certainly he could have no other; but why does Herr Winckelmann rest satisfied with merely adducing this supposed reason of Maffei's? Does it confute itself? Not quite; for although certainly it is not supported by any other evidence, still it surely makes a little probability for itself when one cannot otherwise show that Athenodorus, Polycletus' pupil, and Athenodorus, the assistant of Agesander and Polydorus, cannot possibly have been one and the same person. Fortunately this can be shown, even from the place of their nativity. The first Athenodorus, according to the express testimony of Pausanias, was from Klitor in Arcadia; the other, on the contrary, as Pliny testifies, was born in Rhodes.

Herr Winckelmann cannot have had any object in passing by without completely confuting, by adducing this circumstance, the allegation of Maffei. Much rather must the grounds which, with his undoubted knowledge, he deduces from the artistic quality of the work have appeared to him weighty; for he did not trouble himself whether or not the opinion of Maffei had still any probability. He recognises without hesitation in the Laocoon too many of the *argutiæ* which were peculiar to Lysippus, with which this master first enriched art, to allow of its being considered a work of earlier date.

Yet even if it is proved that the Laocoon cannot be older than Lysippus, is it also proved, then, that it must be of about his time, and cannot possibly be a much later work? If I overlook altogether the ages in which Greek art down to the commencement of the Roman monarchy by turns raised its head high and by turns sank again, why might not Laocoon have been a happy fruit of the rivalry which the wasteful luxury of the first emperors must have excited amongst the artists? Why might not Agesander and his assistants have been the contemporaries of a Strongylon, an Arcesilaus, a Pasiteles, a Posidonius, a Diogenes? Did not the works of these masters share the esteem bestowed on the best which art had then produced? And if undoubted works from their hands were yet extant but the period of their authors unknown, and were no conclusions to be drawn from anything but their art, what divine inspiration is to guard the critic from placing them in the very times which Herr Winckelmann deems alone worthy of the Laocoon?

It is true Pliny does not expressly note the time in which the artists of the Laocoon lived. Yet if I had to argue from the entire context of the passage whether he desires to reckon them with the ancient or with the modern artists, I confess that I seem to discover in it a greater probability for the latter. Let who will, decide it.

After Pliny has spoken in considerable detail of the oldest and greatest masters in sculpture—of Phidias, of Praxiteles, of Scopas—and thereupon has named the rest (especially some whose works were to be seen in Rome) without any chronological order, he continues in the following strain: *Nec multo plurium fama est, quorundam claritati in operibus eximus obstante numero artificum quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam, nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt, sicut in Laocoonte, qui est in Titî imperatoris domo, opus omnibus et picturæ et statuariæ artis præponendum. Ex uno lapide eum et liberos draconumque mirabiles nexu de*

consilii sententia fecere summi artifices, Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii. Similiter Palatinas domus Cæsarum replevere probatissimis signis Craterus cum Pythodoro, Polydectes cum Hermolao, Pythodorus alius cum Artemone, et singularis Aphrodisius Trallianus. Agrippæ Pantheon decoravit Diogenes Atheniensis, et caryatides in columnis templi ejus probantur inter pauca operum: sicut in fastigio posita signa, sed propter altitudinem loci minus celebrata.

Of all the artists named in this passage Diogenes of Athens is the one whose date is most indubitably determined. He decorated the Pantheon of Agrippa, he lived, therefore, in the time of Augustus. But if we consider the words of Pliny more carefully, I believe we shall find the time of Craterus and Pythodorus, of Polydectes and Hermolaus, the second Pythodorus and Artemon as well as Aphrodisius Trallianus, just as uncontestedly settled. He says of them: *Palatinas domus Cæsarum replevere probatissimis signis*. I ask, Can this mean no more than that the palaces of the Cæsars were full of these excellent works? in the sense, that is, that the Emperors sought them in all quarters and had them set up in their dwellings? Surely not; they must have wrought these works expressly for these palaces of the Emperors and must have lived in that age. That there were late artists who wrought only in Italy may surely be concluded from the fact that one finds them mentioned nowhere else. Had they wrought in Greece in earlier times Pausanias would have seen one or other of their works and have preserved a record of them for us. A certain Pythodorus he does indeed allude to, but Harduin is quite wrong in taking him for the Pythodorus named by Pliny. For Pausanias mentions the statue of Juno from the studio of the former, which he saw at Coronea in Boeotia, ἄγαλμα ἀρχαῖον, which appellation he bestows only on the works of those masters who lived in the most primitive and rudest periods of art, long before a Phidias and a Praxiteles. And with works of that sort certainly the Emperors would not have decorated their palaces. Still less weight attaches to the further supposition of Harduin, that Artemon is perhaps the painter of the same name whom Pliny mentions in another place. Identity of name offers only a very slight probability, which is far indeed from warranting us in doing violence to the natural interpretation of a genuine passage.

If consequently it is beyond any doubt that Craterus and Pythodorus, that Polydectes and Hermolaus with the rest lived in the age of the Emperors, whose palaces they filled with their

splendid works; then in my opinion one can assign no other age to these artists either whose names Pliny passes over along with theirs with a mere *similiter*. And these are the masters of the Laocoon. Let us only consider it: if Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus were masters as ancient as Herr Winckelmann takes them to be, how improper were it not for a writer with whom precision of expression is no trifling matter, if he must spring at one bound from them to the most recent masters and make this spring as if it were but an ordinary step!

Yet some may object that this *similiter* refers not to the relationship in respect of period, but to some other circumstance which these masters may have had in common. Pliny, that is to say, may be speaking of such artists as worked in association, and on account of this association remained less well known than they merited. For as no one can appropriate to himself alone the honour of the joint work, and to name on every occasion all who had a share in it would be too long-winded (*quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam, nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt*); in this way their collective names would be neglected. This may have happened to the artists of the Laocoon, as to so many other masters whom the emperors employed for their palaces.

This I grant. But even then it is highly probable that Pliny is speaking here only of later artists who worked in association. For if he had desired to speak also of more ancient masters, why should he have mentioned the artists of the Laocoon only? Why not others also? An Onatas and a Calliteles; a Timokles and Timarchides, or the sons of this Timarchides, from whose hands a jointly-wrought Jupiter existed in Rome. Herr Winckelmann himself says that one might make a long list of this kind of ancient works which had more than one father. And should Pliny have bethought him only of the single Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus, if he did not wish expressly to confine himself to the most recent times?

If, moreover, a conjecture becomes so much the more probable the more and greater the difficulties that can be explained by it, then certainly this one—that the artists of the Laocoon lived under the first Emperors—is so in a very high degree. For had they wrought in Greece at the period in which Herr Winckelmann places them, had the Laocoon itself in earlier days stood in Greece, then the complete silence which the Greeks observed concerning such a work (*opus omnibus et picturae et statuariae artis praeponendum*) is extremely surprising.

It must be extremely surprising if masters so great had wrought nothing else or if Pausanias had never come across their other works in all Greece, no more than the Laocoon itself. In Rome, on the other hand, the greatest masterpiece could remain hidden for a long time, and even had the Laocoon been already finished under Augustus, it need not therefore appear singular that it is Pliny who first makes mention of it; Pliny first, and last. For let us only recall what he says of a *Venus* of Scopas that stood in a temple of Mars at Rome, *quemcunque alium locum nobilitatura Romae quidem magnitudo operum eam obliterat, ac magni officiorum negotiorumque acervi omnes a contemplatione talium abducunt: quoniam otiosorum et in magno loci silentio apta admiratio talis est.*

Those who would gladly see in the Laocoon group an imitation of the Virgilian Laocoon will accept with satisfaction what I have said above. Yet another conjecture has occurred to me which they might not much disapprove. Perhaps (so they may think) it was Asinius Pollio who had the Laocoon of Virgil wrought out by Greek artists. Pollio was a particular friend of the poet, outlived the poet, and appears even to have written a book of his own about the *Æneid*. For where else than in a work of his own concerning that poem can the detached notes so properly have stood which Servius cites from him? Pollio was at once a lover and a connoisseur of art, possessed a rich collection of the most splendid works of the older masters, employed the artists of his own time to make new ones, and with the taste which he showed in his choice so bold a composition as the Laocoön was completely in keeping: *ut fuit acris vehementiæ sic quoque spectari monumenta sua voluit.* Nevertheless, as the collection of Pollio in Pliny's time, when Laocoon stood in the palace of Titus, appears to have been undispersed and all collected in one special Gallery, this conjecture of mine might in its turn lose something of its probability. And why could not Titus himself have done what we wish to ascribe to Pollio?

XXVII

In this view that the artists of the Laocoön flourished under the first Emperors, and at any rate cannot be so old as Herr Winckelmann makes out, I am confirmed by a little piece of news which he himself now for the first time makes public. It is this:—

At Nettuno, formerly Antium, the Cardinal Alexander Albani in the year 1717 discovered, in a great vault which lay under the sea, a vase made of the dark-grey marble now called "Vigio," in which the group is inserted and upon which stands the following inscription.—

ΑΘΑΝΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΑΓΗΣΑΝΔΡΟΥ
ΠΟΔΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ

" 'Athanodorus, son of Agesander of Rhodes, made this.' We learn from this inscription that father and son wrought on Laocoon, and presumably Apollodorus (Polydorus) was also Agesander's son, for this Athanodorus can be no other than he whom Pliny names. Further, this inscription proves that more works of art than merely three, as Pliny asserts, have been found on which the artists have set 'made' in the perfect tense, that is to say, ἐποίησε, *fecit*; he informs us that the other artists out of modesty expressed themselves in the imperfect tense, ἐποίει, *faciebat*."

In all this Herr Winckelmann will find but little to contradict the supposition that the Athanodorus of this inscription can be no other than he of whom Pliny makes mention amongst the artists of the Laocoon. Athanodorus and Athenodorus, moreover, is but one name; for the Rhodians used the Dorian dialect. But concerning what he further infers from it I have something to say. First, that Athenodorus was a son of Agesander may pass: it is very probable, only not incontestable. For it is well known that there were old artists who, instead of naming themselves from their fathers, preferred to be called after their teachers. What Pliny says of the "brothers" Apollonius and Tauriscus is hardly susceptible of any other interpretation.

But how? This inscription—shall it, then, confute Pliny's allegation that not more than three works of art have been found the makers of which made themselves known in the perfect tense (instead of ἐποίει, by ἐποίησε)? This inscription! Why are we to learn for the first time from it what we might have gathered long before from many others? Have we not already found upon the statue of Germanicus "Κλεομένης ἐποίησε"? on the so-called *Deification* of Homer "Ἀρχέλαος ἐποίησε"? on the famous vase at Gaeta "Σαλπίων ἐποίησε," and so on?

Herr Winckelmann may say: "Who knows this better than I? But"—he will add—"so much the worse for Pliny! His

allegation is then so much the oftener contradicted, so much the more certainly refuted."

Not quite! For how, if Herr Winckelmann makes Pliny say more than he actually wants to say? and if, therefore, the examples cited confute not Pliny's assertion, but merely the surplusage which Herr Winckelmann has imported into it? And so it is in reality. I must cite the whole passage. Pliny in his dedicatory epistle to Titus wants to speak of his work with the modesty of a man who is best aware how far it falls short of perfection. He finds one noteworthy instance of such modesty among the Greeks whose boastful book-titles, large in promises (*inscriptiones propter quas vadamontium deseri possit*), he rather makes game of, and says: *Et ne in totum videar Graecos insectari, ex illis nos velim intelligi pingendi fingendique conditoribus, quos in libellis his invenies, absoluta opera, et illa quoque quae mirando non satiamur, pendenti titulo inscripsisse ut APELLES FACIEBAT, aut POLYCLETUS; tanquam inchoata semper arte et imperfecta; ut contra judiciorum varietates superesset artificii regressus ad veniam, velut emendaturo quidquid desideraretur, si non esset interceptus. Quare plenum verecundiae illud est, quod omnia opera tanquam novissima inscribere, et tanquam singulis fato adempti. Tria non amplius, ut opinor, absolute traduntur inscripta ILLE FECIT quae suis locis reddam quo apparuit, summam artis securitatem auctori placuisse, et ob id magna invidia fuere omnia ea.* I would ask particular attention to Pliny's words: *pingendi fingendique conditoribus*. Pliny does not say that the custom of acknowledging one's work in the imperfect tense was universal or had been observed by all artists at all times; he says expressly that only the first old masters—those creators of the plastic arts, *pingendi fingendique conditores*, an Apelles, a Polycletus and their contemporaries—had had this wise modesty; and as he names these only, he thereby intimates by silence, but plainly enough, that their successors, especially in the more recent periods, had manifested more self-confidence.

But taking this for granted, as one must, the inscription here mentioned of one only of the three artists of the Laocoon may be perfectly accurate, and it may nevertheless be true that, as Pliny says, only about three works were extant in the inscriptions of which their authors made use of the perfect tense—that is to say, among the older works from the time of Apelles, Polycletus, Nicias, Lysippus. But, then, it cannot be accurate that Athenodorus and his assistants were contemporaries of

Apelles and Lysippus, as Herr Winckelmann would make them. We must argue rather : if it is true that amongst the works of the older artists, Apelles, Polycletus and the rest of this class, there were only about three in whose inscriptions the perfect tense was employed ; if it is true that Pliny has himself specified these three works, then Athenodorus, who is author of none of these three works, and who nevertheless uses the perfect tense upon his works, cannot belong to those old artists : he cannot be the contemporary of Apelles and Lysippus, but must be assigned to a later period.

In short, I believe it might be taken as a quite trustworthy criterion that all artists who used the *ἔποιησε* have flourished long after the times of Alexander the Great and shortly before or under the Emperors. Of Cleomenes it is unquestionable ; of Archelaus it is in a high degree probable ; and of Salpion at any rate the contrary can in no way be shown. And so of the rest, Athenodorus not excepted.

Herr Winckelmann may himself be judge in the matter. But I protest at once in anticipation against the contrary proposition. If all artists who used the *ἔποιησε* belong to the later schools, it does not follow that all who used the *ἔποίησε* belong to the earlier. Among the later artists it may be that some actually possessed this modesty, which so well becomes a great man, and that others affected to possess it.

XXVIII

After the Laocoön, on no point was I more curious than on what Herr Winckelmann might have to say of the so-called Borghese Gladiator. I fancy I have made a discovery about this statue on which I pique myself as much as one can about discoveries of the kind. I was already apprehensive that Herr Winckelmann would have anticipated me in it. But I find nothing of the sort in his book, and if anything could make me distrustful of its correctness it would be just this, that my apprehension has not been justified. "Some people," says Herr Winckelmann, "make of this statue a Discobolus—that is, one who is throwing the discus or a metal quoit, which was also the opinion of the celebrated Herr von Stosch in a letter to me, without, I imagine, a sufficient consideration of the posture in which this kind of figure should be placed. For a man who is about to throw something must withdraw his body backwards,

and when the throw is being made his weight rests on his right leg, while the other is free; but here the posture is just the opposite. The whole figure is thrown forward, and rests on the left leg, the right being behind and outstretched to the utmost. The right arm of the statue is new, and in the hand a piece of a javelin has been placed; on the left arm one sees the strap of a shield which he has been holding. If one considers that the head and the eyes are directed upwards and that the figure appears to guard itself with the shield against something coming from above, one might with more justification take this statue as a representation of a soldier who has particularly distinguished himself in a perilous situation. on public gladiators the honour of a statue was presumably never bestowed among the Greeks, and this work appears to be older than the introduction of gladiators amongst them."

There could not be a juster conclusion. This statue is just as little of a gladiator as it is of a quoit-player, it is really the representation of a warrior who distinguished himself in such a posture at some moment of danger. But as Herr Winckelmann guessed this so happily, why did he not go further? How is it that the very warrior did not occur to him, who in this very posture averted the complete defeat of an army and to whom his grateful country erected a statue in the identical posture? In one word, the statue is Chabrias.

The proof of this is the following passage of Nepos in the life of this general: *Hic quoque in summis habitus est ducibus, resque multas memoria dignas gessit. Sed ex his elucet maxime inventum ejus in proelio, quod apud Thebas fecit, quum Boeotus subsidio venisset. Namque in eo victoriae fidente summo duce Agesilao, fugatis jam ab eo conductitis catervis, reliquam phalangem loco vetuit cedere, obnixoque genu scuto projectaque hasta impetum excipere hostium docuit. Id novum Agesilaus contuens, progredi non est ausus, suosque jam incurrentes tuba revocavit. Hoc usque eo tota Graecia fama celebratum est, ut illo statu Chabrias sibi statuam fieri voluerit, quae publice ei ab Atheniensibus in foro constituta est. Ex quo factum est, ut postea athletae ceterique artifices his statibus in statuus ponendis uterentur, in quibus victoriam essent adepti.*

I know people will still hesitate a moment to give me their assent, but I hope, too, really for only a moment. The posture of Chabrias seems to me to be perfectly identical with that of the Borghese statue. The forward-thrown spear, *projecta hasta*, is common to both, but the *obnixo genu scuto* the commentators

explain by *obnixo in scutum, obfirmato genu ad scutum*: Chabrias showed his men how they should firmly prop the shield by the knee and behind it receive the enemy—the statue, on the contrary, holds the shield high. But how if the commentators were mistaken? How if the words *obnixo genu scuto* were not to be associated, and one must rather read *obnixo genu* by itself, and *scuto* by itself or along with the immediately following *projectaque hasta*? One needs but a single comma and the resemblance is at once as perfect as possible. The statue is a soldier, *qui obnixo genu, scuto projectaque hasta impetum hostis excipit*; it shows what Chabrias did, and is the statue of Chabrias. That the comma is actually required is shown by the *que* attached to *projecta*, for if *obnixo genu scuto* were to be read together it would be superfluous, as, indeed, for that reason it is omitted in some editions.

With the high antiquity which would thus be attributable to this statue the form of the letters in the artist's inscription found upon it perfectly agrees, and Herr Winckelmann himself has concluded from the same that it is the most ancient of the existing statues in Rome on which the artist has acknowledged the authorship. I leave it to his penetrating glance whether he has noticed any other point of art that would conflict with my view. Should he honour it with his concurrence, then I might flatter myself that I had furnished a rather better example how happily the classic writers are illustrated by the works of ancient art, and these in their turn by them, than is to be found in all Spence's folio.

XXIX

Herr Winckelmann brings to his work a limitless erudition and an exact and all-embracing knowledge of art, and has yet at the same time wrought with the noble confidence of the ancient artists, who devoted all their diligence to their main subject, and, as for subsidiary matters, treated them with an apparently deliberate negligence or handed them over entirely to the first comer. It is no small merit to have fallen only into such errors as anyone might have avoided. They strike one on the first cursory perusal, and if they are to be noticed at all, it must be merely with a view to remind certain people who imagine nobody has eyes but themselves that they do not require to be noticed.

In his treatises on the Imitation of the Greek masterpieces

Herr Winckelmann has already been more than once misled by Junius. Junius is a very insidious writer; his whole work is a Cento, and as he is always trying to speak in the words of the ancients, he not seldom applies passages from them to painting which in their proper place treat of anything rather than painting. When, for example, Herr Winckelmann wishes to teach us that the highest in art just as little as in poetry is to be reached by the mere imitation of Nature, that both poet and painter must choose the impossible that is probable rather than the merely possible, he adds. "The 'possibility and truth' which Longinus demands from a painter in opposition to the 'incredible' of the poet can quite well exist alongside of it" But this postscript would be better away, for it shows the two greatest critics in a disagreement that is wholly without grounds. It is not true that Longinus ever said such a thing. He says something similar of eloquence and poetry, but by no means of poetry and painting. 'Ὡς δ' ἑτερόν τι ἡ ῥητορικὴ φαντασία βούλεται, καὶ ἕτερον ἢ παρὰ ποιηταῖς, οὐκ ἂν λάθοι σε, he writes to his Terentian, οὐδ' ὅτι τῆς μὲν ἐν ποιήσει τέλος ἐστὶν ἐκπληξίς, τῆς δ' ἐν λόγοις ἐνάργεια. And again,—Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς μυθικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν ὑπερέκπτωσιν καὶ πάντῃ τὸ πιστὸν ὑπεραίρουσαν· τῆς δὲ ῥητορικῆς φαντασίας κάλλιστον αἰεὶ τὸ ἐμπροκτον καὶ ἐναλῆθες. Only Junius here edges in "painting" instead of "eloquence," and it was in Junius, and not in Longinus, that Herr Winckelmann read: *Praesertim cum Poeticae phantasiae finis sit ἐκπληξίς, Pictoriae vero ἐνάργεια*. Καὶ τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς, *ut loquitur idem Longinus*, and so on Very good; Longinus' words indeed, but not Longinus' meaning!

The same thing must have happened to him in the following observation —

"All actions," he says, "and postures of the Greek figures that are not marked with the character of wisdom, but were overpassionate and wild, fell into a fault which the ancient artists called Parenthyrsus." The ancient artists? That could only be shown from Junius. The Parenthyrsus was a technical term in rhetoric, and perhaps, as the passage in Longinus appears to indicate, only to be found in Theodorus.

Τούτῳ παράκειται τρίτον τι κακίας εἶδος ἐν τοῖς παθητικοῖς, ὅπερ ὁ Θεόδωρος παρένθυρον ἐκάλει. ἔστι δὲ πάθος ἄκαιρον καὶ κενόν, ἐνθα μὴ δεῖ πάθους· ἢ ἄμετρον, ἐνθα μέτριον δεῖ. Indeed I really doubt whether this word can be applied to painting at all. For in eloquence and poetry there is a kind of pathos that can be carried as high as possible without becom-

ing Parthyrsus, and only the highest pathos in the wrong place is Parthyrsus. In painting, however, the highest pathos would be Parthyrsus always, well as it might be excused by the circumstances of the person who expresses it.

To all appearance, then, various inaccuracies also in his *History of Art* have arisen simply from the fact that Herr Winckelmann has in his haste taken counsel with Junius only, and not with the originals themselves. For example, when he tries to show by instances that with the Greeks everything excellent in all kinds of art and work was particularly esteemed, and the best workman in the most insignificant department of labour could make his name illustrious, he introduces amongst other things the following: "We know the name of a maker of very exact balances or weighing-machines—he was called Parthenius." Herr Winckelmann can only have read the words of Juvenal, to which he here appeals, *lances Parthemo factas*, in the catalogue of Junius. For had he referred to Juvenal himself, he would not have been misled by the ambiguity of the word *lanx*, but would at once have recognised from the context that the poet did not mean scales or balances, but plates and dishes. Juvenal is at the moment praising Catullus because in a dangerous storm at sea he acted like the beaver which bites away its own flesh in order to escape with its life, and caused his costliest things to be thrown into the sea, in order not along with them to sink with the ship. These treasures he describes, and says amongst other things:—

*Ille nec argentum dubitabat mittere, lances
Parthemo factas, urnae cratera capacem
Et dignum sitiente Pholo vel conjuge Fusci
Adde et bascaudas et mille escaria, multum
Caelati, biberat quo callidus emtor Olynthi.*

Lances, which stand here amongst goblets and kettles, what else can they be but plates and dishes? And what does Juvenal mean to say but this, that Catullus caused to be thrown overboard all his table silver, amongst which were dishes of chased work by Parthenius? *Parthenius*, says the ancient commentator, *caelatoris nomen*. But when Grangæus in his notes on this name adds, "*sculptor, de quo Plinius*," he must only have written this as a good guess; for Pliny mentions no artist of this name.

"Yes," continues Herr Winckelmann, "even the name of the saddler, as we should call him, has been preserved who made Ajax's leathern shield." This, too, he cannot have taken from

the source to which he refers his reader, the Life of Homer by Herodotus. For here, certainly, the lines from the *Iliad* are cited in which the poet assigns the name of Tychius to this worker in leather; but it is at the same time expressly stated that in reality a leather-worker of Homer's acquaintance bore this name, to which he wished to show friendship and gratitude by inserting it in his poem: 'Ἀπέδωκε δὲ χάριν καὶ Τυχίῳ τῷ σκυτεῖ, ὃς ἐδέξατο αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ Νέῳ Τείχει προσελθόντα πρὸς τὸ σκυτεῖον, ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι καταζεύξας ἐν τῇ Ἰλιάδι τοιοῦδε.

Αἶας δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε, φέρων σάκος ἥντε πύργον,
 Χάλκεον, ἐπταβόειον, ὃ οἱ Τυχίος κάμει τεύχων,
 Σκυτοτόμων ὅχ' ἄριστος, ὃν ἔνι οἰκίᾳ ναίων.

It is therefore precisely the opposite of what Herr Winckelmann avers; the name of the saddler who had made the shield of Ajax was already in Homer's time so completely forgotten that the poet took the liberty of inserting an altogether different name in place of it.

Various other minor errors are mere slips of memory, or relate to things which he introduces merely by way of incidental illustration. For instance, it was Hercules, and not Bacchus, of whom Parrhasius boasted that he had appeared to him in the form in which he painted him.

Tauriscus was not a man of Rhodes, but of Tralles in Lydia.

The *Antigone* is not the first tragedy of Sophocles. But I refrain from gathering together a heap of such trifles. It could not, of course, appear censoriousness; but whoever knows my high esteem for Herr Winckelmann might take it for fastidiousness.

NATHAN THE WISE
A DRAMATIC POEM IN FIVE ACTS
BY
GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

PERSONS

SULTAN SALADIN.

SITTAH, his sister.

NATHAN, a rich Jew in Jerusalem.

RECHA, his adopted daughter.

DAJA, a Christian, but in the house
of the Jew as companion to Recha.

A young Knight Templar.

A Dervish.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem.

A Friar.

An Emir, with various Mamelukes of Saladin.

ACT I—SCENE I

SCENE : *Apartment in Nathan's house*

Nathan returning from a journey. To him Daja

Daja. 'Tis he ! 'tis Nathan ! Now may God be praised
That you at last, at last return again.

Nathan. Yes, Daja ; God be praised ! But why *at last* ?
Have I then hoped for earlier home-coming ?
And was it in my power ? Think ! Babylon
By such a road as I perforce must follow,
Now left, now right, is from Jerusalem
At least two hundred leagues ; and then my task,
To gather in the debts the merchants owed me,
Was scarce a business to make for speed,
'Tis no such off-hand matter.

Daja. Nathan, Nathan,
How wretched meanwhile all things might have been
To greet you on return ! Your house. . . .

Nathan. On fire !
So much I've heard already ; now God grant
That this is all the evil I must hear of !

Daja. So near it was to burning to the ground.

Nathan. Then, Daja, we had built another house ;
And one to suit us better.

Daja. True enough !
Yet Recha by a hair's breadth only 'scaped
Of burning with it.

Nathan. Burning ? Recha ? She ?
That no one told me. Then indeed no house
I should have wanted more. My Recha burned,
Within a hair's breadth !—Ha ! she is, in truth !
Has actually perished ! Say the word !
Out with it ! Kill me, torture me no longer—
Yes, yes, she was burned with it.

Daja. Were it so,
Would it be from my lips that you would hear it ?

Nathan. Why do you fright me, then? O Recha mine!
My Recha!

Daja. Yours? Your Recha call you her?

Nathan. How should I ever disaccustom me
To call this child my own?

Daja. Do you name all
That you possess with only so much right
Your own?

Nathan. Nothing with greater! Everything
I else possess Nature and Fortune's grace
Rained down on me. This property alone
I owe to virtue.

Daja. At how dear a rate
You make me pay for your pure goodness, Nathan!
If goodness, with such purpose exercised,
Can be called goodness!

Nathan. Such a purpose, say you?
What, then?

Daja. My conscience . . .

Nathan. Daja, first of all,
Listen and hear me tell . . .

Daja. My conscience, I . . .

Nathan. What a rare stuff I bought in Babylon,
Tasteful and worthy of you, so rich and fine,
Even for Recha I scarce have brought a finer.

Daja. What use? For, Nathan, I must tell you freely
My conscience will no longer be deceived

Nathan. And how the bracelets, and the golden chain,
The ear-rings and the brooch will pleasure you,
Which in Damascus booths I rummaged out;
Ask me to show them.

Daja. Ever 'twas your way!
Only at ease when giving costly gifts!

Nathan. Be you as glad to take as I to give—
Nor speak of them!

Daja. Nor speak! Nathan, who doubts
That you are honour's self, great-heartedness?
And yet . . .

Nathan. And yet—am but a Jew—is't not
What would you say?

Daja. Nathan, what I would say
You know far better.

Nathan. Well, no words

Daja. I'm dumb.

What God may see herein deserving doom
And which I cannot alter or prevent—
Cannot, I say—come on you !

Nathan. Come on me !—
But now where is she ? Where lies hid ? O *Daja*,
Are you deceiving me ? Does she not know
That I am come ?

Daja. That ask I you, her father !
The fright still quivers in her every nerve,
Whate'er her fancy shapes is only fire,
Nothing but fire. In sleep her spirit wakes,
And sleeps in waking ; now an animal,
And now more than an angel.

Nathan. Dear my child !
What are we human creatures !

Daja. Long she lay
This morning with closed eyes, and was as dead,
Sudden she started up and cried, " O hearken !
My father's camels come : I hear their tread,
I hear his gentle voice ! "—as suddenly
Her eye grew dim again, and so her head,
Her arm's support withdrawn, dropped on the pillow.
I, out at gate ! and there beheld your face !
What wonder ! her whole soul was every hour
With you, with you alone—and him.

Nathan. With him ?
What him ?

Daja. With him who saved her from the fire.

Nathan. Saved her ! Who was he ? Who ? And where is he ?
Who saved for me my *Recha* ? Tell me, who ?

Daja. 'Twas a young Templar Knight whom just before,
Brought here a prisoner, *Saladin* set free.

Nathan. A Templar ! What ! Whom *Saladin* let live ?
And did no meaner miracle suffice
To save my *Recha* ? God !

Daja. No. Without him
Venturing once more his new-won life, she perished !

Nathan. Where is he, *Daja*, this heroic man ?
Where is he ? Come and lead me to his feet.
But first you gave him, not reserving aught,
The treasure I had left you ? Gave him all ?
Promised him more—much more ?

Daja.

Alas ! we could not.

Nathan. Not ? Not ?

Daja. He came, and no one knows from whence ;
He went, no one knew whither. Without word,
Led by his ear alone, with fore-spread mantle,
Boldly through flame and smoke he sought the voice
That called to us for help. We gave him lost,
When suddenly from out the smoke and flame he stood,
In his strong arm holding her high. Unmoved
And cold before our sobbed-out thanks, he set
His prize down gently, thrird the crowd, and vanished !

Nathan. Vanished ! But not for ever, I will hope.

Daja. When the first days were past we saw him go,
Under the palm-trees walking up and down,
Yonder, that shade the Holy Sepulchre.
With trembling I approached him, spoke my thanks,
Besought, entreated, conjured him but once
To see the gentle girl who could not rest
Until her thanks were wept out at his feet.

Nathan. Well ?

Daja. Vain, in vain ! To our entreaty deaf,
He poured even bitter mockery on me . . .

Nathan. Till you were frightened from him . . .

Daja. No, in truth !

For I assailed him every day anew ;
And every day endured new mockery.
What did I not bear from him ! What had not
Willingly borne ! But many days now past
He comes no more to seek the palm-trees' shade
Girdling the quiet grave of the Redeemer ;
And no man knows where now he lives retired—
You are amazed ! You ponder !

Nathan.

I but think

What feeling this in such a soul as Recha's
Surely begets. To find herself disdained
By one proven worthy of so high regard ;
So driven away, and still to be so drawn ;
A long contention sets of heart and head,
Whether misanthropy shall win the day
Or melancholy ; often neither wins,
And fantasy that mixes in the strife
Makes of us dreamers in whom, ill exchange !
The head acts heart, and heart acts head by turns ;

The latter is, if I have not misread her,
My Recha's case : she dreams.

Daja. She's dutiful,

And all love-worthy !

Nathan. Still she dreams, she dreams !

Daja. One special crotchet—may we dare to call it?—

She cherishes. 'Tis that her Templar Knight
Can be no earthly creature, born of woman ;
One of the angels rather, whose sweet guard
She trusted in from her blest infancy,
Flew from his veil wherein even in the fire
He hovered round her, took the Templar's form
To save her—do not smile ! Who knows ? who knows ?
Even if we smile, we'll leave her this illusion
In which the Jew, the Christian, and the Muslim
Are joined in one—surely a blessed dream !

Nathan. Even to me 'tis blessed ! Go, brave *Daja* ;

See what she does ; if I can speak with her—
This wondrous angel-guardian then I'll find,
And if it pleases him still here below
To play the pilgrim, still his knightly part
To fill, sure I shall find and bring him hither.

Daja. You undertake things harder than you know.

Nathan. Then the sweet dream to actuality
More sweet will yield its place, for, trust me, *Daja*,
To men a human creature is more dear
Than any angel, so you will not grieve
To see this angel-mania exorcised.

Daja. You are so good, and yet you are so wicked !
I go—but listen, see !—here *Recha* comes.

SCENE II

Recha, and the foregoing

Recha. Home safe and sound, my father, home once more ?

I feared 'twas but your voice sent to announce you.

But come ; no hills, or wastes, or rivers part

Us now ; we breathe within the self-same walls.

Why haste you not your *Recha* to embrace ?

Poor *Recha* ! who meanwhile was burned with fire,

Almost, but almost only : Shudder not

It is a horrid death, to die in fire !

Nathan My child, my darling child !

Recha. And you must over
Euphrates, Tigris, Jordan ; over who knows
What waters ? O how often have I trembled
For you, before the fire came close to me !
Since then I think to die in water were
Refreshment, comfort, safety ; but in truth
You did not drown, nor did I die in fire—
Let us be glad and lift our heart to God.
He bore you and the vessel on the wings
Of His *invisible* angel-host across
The treacherous rivers. He too gave the sign
To my good angel that he *visibly*
On his white wing should bear me through the fire.

Nathan. (White wing ! Ah, yes, the Templar's fore-spread
cloak)

Recha Visibly, visibly, should bear me through
The scorching flame, safe covered by his wing ;
Thus I have seen an angel face to face,
And *my own* angel.

Nathan. Recha were worthy that,
And would in him see nought more beautiful
Than he in her.

Recha [*smiling*]. Whom flatter you, my Father ?
The angel, or yourself ?

Nathan. Yet, had a man,
Even such as Nature gives us every day,
Done you this service, he must then appear
To you an angel. Yea, he must and would.

Recha. No, not that kind of angel, no ! a real,
An actual angel he ! Have not yourself
Taught me 'tis possible that angels are,
That God for good to them that love Him can
Work wonders ? And I love Him.

Nathan. He loves you,
And works for such as you His hourly wonders ;
Ay, has indeed from all eternity
Wrought them.

Recha. I love to hear that doctrine.

Nathan. How ?
That it would sound so natural, commonplace ;
If a mere Knight had saved you, were it then
Less miracle ? Chief miracle it is

That the true miracles become to us
So commonplace, so everyday. Without
This universal miracle could it be
That thinking men should use the word like children,
Who only gape and stare upon what's strange,
And think what's newest is most wonderful

Daja. [To *Nathan*.] O will you, Nathan, with such subtleties
Break her now o'er-stretched brain?

Nathan. Hear me! For *Recha*
Were it not miracle enough to find
Her saved by one whom first a miracle
Must himself save? Yea, no small miracle!
For what man ever heard that *Saladin*
Spared a Knight Templar's blood? or such a Knight
Did ever ask or hope that he should spare him,
Or offered more for freedom than the belt
Carrying his weapon, or at most his sword?

Recha. My father, that proves all, and argues clear
It was no Templar, but the semblance only,
For if no captive Templar ever came
Into Jerusalem but to certain death;
Nor any such was ever granted freedom
To walk Jerusalem streets, then how could one
Spring up at midnight for my rescue?

Nathan. See!
She argues well. You, *Daja*, answer her.
You tell me he came here a prisoner;
Then doubtless you know more.

Daja. Well, yes, I know
What common rumour says—that *Saladin*
Showed mercy to him for his dear resemblance
To a child-brother *Saladin* had loved.
Yet as full twenty years have run their course
Since the boy died—his name I know not what;
He dwelt, I know not where—the story seems
An idle tale strange and incredible!

Nathan. Nay, *Daja*, why were this incredible?
Is it rejected only to make room
For things less credible, as happens oft?
Why should not *Saladin*, who loves his race,
As all men know, have had in younger years
A brother whom he specially beloved?
Was't never known two faces should be like?

Can an old passion not return again?
Like causes, do they not work like effects?
Since when? Tell me, what's here incredible?
Ah, my wise Daja, it were then no more
A miracle, *your* miracles alone,
Demand, or shall I say deserve, belief?

Daja. You mock.

Nathan. But first you mocked at me. Yet, Recha,
Even so your great deliverance remains
A miracle and possible alone
To Him who by weak threads can turn—His sport
If not His mockery—the stern resolves
And deep-laid plans of monarchs.

Recha. O my father!
My father, if I err, you know I err
Unwillingly.

Nathan. Nay, more, you wish to learn:
But see! A brow so moulded or so arched;
Bridge of a nose, this way or that way shaped;
Eyebrows that on a blunt or sharper ridge
Rest full or pencilled delicate, a line,
A bend, a fold, an angle, or a mole,
Or what else, on some Western countenance,
And you escape the fire, in Asia!
Were that no wonder, miracle-hungry folk?
Why trouble, then, an angel?

Daja. Why, what harm—
Nathan, if I may speak—what, after all,
What harm to wish an angel for a saviour
Rather than man? For so one feels the First
Ineffable Cause of one's salvation drawn
Much closer.

Nathan. Pride, mere pride! The iron pot
Wants silver tongs to draw her from the furnace,
That she may dream she's made of silver too.
Pah! ask you what's the harm? Then, I would ask,
What profit? "That's to feel God so much nearer"—
Your thought—is folly, if not blasphemy.
The thought is harmful, does the soul a mischief.
Come, hear me for a moment. To this being
Who saved you, be he angel or but man,
Would you not render service in return
With a glad heart, repaying what you might?

How then and what, if angel? What of service,
Say what great service can you do for him?
Thank him, you'll say, and sigh to him or pray,
Dissolve in rapturous tears before him, fast,
Give alms and celebrate his Festival.
All nothing! For methinks thereby far more
Yourself and your dear neighbours gain than he.
Your fasting will not fatten him, your expense
Not make him rich, nor will your rapturous worship
Add to his glory, nor your faith in him
Make him a mightier angel. Is't not so?
But, if a human creature!

Daja. Certainly,
I know a human creature's needs had given
More opportunity to serve; God knows
How ready we were for it! But he wished,
He needed, nothing; in himself content,
And with himself at peace as only angels
Are or can be.

Recha. At last, when he quite vanished . . .
Nathan. Vanished! How mean you, vanished? Shown him-
self

Under the palms no more? Then, did you make
More eager search elsewhere?

Daja. We did not. No!
Nathan. No, *Daja*, no? But thereof may come sorrow!
Fond dreamers! Should your angel now be sick?

Recha. Sick!

Daja. Sick! O say not so!

Recha. What shuddering
Strikes my heart dead! Feel, *Daja*, this cold brow—
So warm it was, and suddenly 'tis ice!

Nathan. He is a Frank, a stranger to our clime;
He's young; unused to hunger and to vigil,
And heavy labours laid upon him now.

Recha. Sick!

Daja. *Nathan* means only it were possible.

Nathan. Well, there he lies! Without a friend, or gold
To buy friends for him.

Recha. Father, O this heart!

Nathan. No tendance, counsel none, nor friendly talk,
The spoil of pain, perhaps of death, he lies!

Recha. Where? where?

Nathan. He who for one he had not seen
Nor ever knew—enough, a fellow creature—
Plunged in the fire . . .

Daja O spare her, spare her, Nathan !

Nathan Who would not nearer come or further know

What he had saved, to spare himself the thanks.

Daja. O pity her, Nathan !

Nathan. Further, who desires not
To see her more, unless again to save—
Enough—a fellow creature.

Daja Cease, and look !

Nathan. He on his bed of death, nor comfort hath
But memory of this deed !

Daja. O Nathan, cease !
You kill her !

Nathan. Him you killed, or might have killed.
Recha ! My Recha ! this is medicine,
Not poison that I bring. Come to yourself !
He lives, mayhap is not even sick !

Recha. In truth ?
Not dead ? Not sick ?

Nathan. Not dead, for sure, not dead !
For God rewards good deeds, even here rewards them.
But come ! I need not teach you what you know :
How easier far is dreaming pious dreams
Than acting bravely ; how a worthless creature
Will dream fine dreams, in order to escape—
(Though oft his object's hidden from himself)—
Some serviceable labour.

Recha Ah, my father !
Never again leave Recha to herself !
May it not be that he is only gone
Upon a journey ?

Nathan. Yes, without a doubt.
I see, below, a Mussulman who scans
With searching gaze my camels and their load.
Who is he ? Know you him ?

Daja. It is your dervish.

Nathan. Who ?

Daja. Why, your chess-companion—your dervish !

Nathan. Al-Hafi ! my Al-Hafi ?

Daja. Purse-bearer
To the Sultan now.

Nathan. Al-Hafi ! Are you dreaming?
'Tis he ! in truth, 'tis he ! He comes this way—
In with you, quick ! And now what shall I hear ?

SCENE III

Nathan and the Dervish

Dervish. Do not be startled, open your eyes wide !

Nathan. Is't you ? Or is it not ? In silk attire,
A dervish !

Dervish. Well, why not ? Can nought be made
Out of a dervish, nothing ? Tell me why ?

Nathan. O much, no doubt ! But I have ever thought
The true, the genuine dervish, would refuse
To be aught else than dervish.

Dervish. By the prophet !
That I'm no genuine dervish may be true.
Yet when one must—

Nathan. What ! *must*—a dervish *must* ?
No man needs must, and shall a dervish, then ?
What must he ?

Dervish. What a true man asks of him
And he sees clear is right ; that must a dervish !

Nathan. By Heaven, thou speak'st the truth. Come hither,
man,

Let me embrace thee. Thou art still my friend ?

Dervish. Dost thou not ask first what I am become ?

Nathan. Despite what thou'rt become !

Dervish. But might I not
Be now a fellow of State whose friendship were
To thee inopportune, a burden ?

Nathan. If thy heart
Is Dervish still, I'll trust it. For State office,
That's but a garment !

Dervish. Which still must be regarded ;
What think you ? Now advise me—at your court
What should I be ?

Nathan. A Dervish, nothing more.
Yet later, very probably, a cook.

Dervish. And thus with you unlearn my handicraft ?
Just cook ! Not waiter also ? Now confess
Saladin knows me better—I am made

His Keeper of the Treasure.

Nathan. Thou? By him?

Dervish. The smaller Treasure, be it understood;

The chief, that of his House, his father guards.

Nathan. His House is large.

Dervish. And larger than thou thinkest,
For every beggar is a member of it.

Nathan. Yet Saladin so hates the beggar tribe—

Dervish. That root and branch he means to blot them out,

Though in the attempt himself become a beggar.

Nathan. Bravo! That mean I; Saladin, well done!

Dervish. And beggar he is now, in spite of one!

For every sunset sees his treasury

Emptyer than empty. For however full

The morning's flood, the ebb comes ere midday.

Nathan. By channels drained, alike impossible

To fill or close.

Dervish. You hit the bull's eye there.

Nathan. I know it.

Dervish. Truly, it is little good for princes,

Vultures to be among the carcases;

But ten times less when they are carcases

Among the vultures.

Nathan. Not yet that, my dervish.

Not that!

Dervish. Your speech is wisdom, sir. Now come

What will you give to have my place from me?

Nathan. What does your place bring in?

Dervish. To me? Not much.

To you it would be wondrous profitable.

For were the Treasure at ebb, as oft it is—

Then you would raise your sluices; make advances

And take in usury whatever pleased you.

Nathan. With interest on interest again?

Dervish. Ev'n so!

Nathan. Until my capital were interest

And nothing more.

Dervish. Is that no lure for you?

Divorce then, nothing else, is what remains

To us two friends and our past happiness!

For verily I reckoned much on you.

Nathan. Verily? Reckoned! How?

Dervish. That you would help me carry

My office with all honour, and offer me

An ever-open treasury You tremble.

Nathan. Well, let us understand each other. Here

Is room for difference. Thou, my friend, art thou.

Al-Hafi, dervish, to my uttermost

Is welcome, but Al-Hafi, Saladin's

Attorney—why, to him—

Dervish. Ah ! I guessed right.

Thou would'st be kind if prudence should allow,

Prudent and sage. But patience ! Thou would'st make

Of one Al-Hafi two ; but presently

Those two may separate. See this robe of honour

Saladin gave me, look before it fades

And turns to rags, such as may clothe a dervish,

Hangs on a nail in old Jerusalem,

And I am by the Ganges, where barefoot

I lightly tread the hot sand with my teachers.

Nathan. That would be like you !

Dervish. And play chess with them.

Nathan. Your chiefest joy !

Dervish. Think only, what seduced me !

That I should be no more a beggar, rather

Might play the rich man 'mongst the beggars, might

Perchance, hey presto ! change the richest beggar

Into a poor rich man ?

Nathan. No, no ; not that !

Dervish. No, something more absurd ! For the first time

Flattery trapped me, the good-hearted fancy

Of Saladin it was that overcame me.

Nathan. What fancy ?

Dervish. " Only a beggar could interpret

The soul of beggars, only a beggar learn

How rightly to give alms. Your predecessor,"

So said he, " was too cold by half, too rough ;

When he did give, he gave ungraciously ;

Blustered enquiry of the wretch he gave to ;

Not satisfied to know the need, must learn

First how the need arose, and then weighed out

According to the cause, a stingy dole.

But not so will Al-Hafi ! Nor in him

Will Saladin appear unkindly kind.

Al-Hafi is not as choked pipes that yield

In mud and foam what they received so pure,

The limpid waters. No, Al-Hafi thinks,
Al-Hafi feels as I do." Such the tune
The fowler's pleasing pipe played in mine ear
Till the bullfinch was netted. O a fool!
Fool of a fool am I!

Nathan. Gently, my Dervish,
Gently!

Dervish. Eh, what! Were it not foolery
To tread men underfoot by scores of thousands,
Starve, rob, enslave, lash, stab and crucify them,
Then to a handful play philanthropist?
Were it not foolery to ape the mercy
Of the All-Highest, Who sends sun and rain
Alike upon the evil and the good,
On wilderness and pasture, to ape this
And not to have the overflowing riches
Of the Almighty? What! were it not folly. . . .

Nathan No more, Al-Hafi, cease!

Dervish. Nay, of my share
In this wild folly let me question you.
Were it not foolish in these fooleries
To note the good side only, and be partner
For the good's sake in folly? Answer me!

Nathan. Al-Hafi, ask you counsel? Hear it, then;
' Make haste, return into the wilderness!
With men you might, dehumanised, forget,
Unlearn to be a man.

Dervish. This fear I too.
Farewell!

Nathan What! what! so fast away? Dost then imagine [Exit.
The desert will take wings? Would he but wait
And hearken to a friend! Ho! ho! Al-Hafi!
He's gone; and I so wished to question him
About our Templar. In all likelihood
He knows him.

SCENE IV

Enter Daja hastily. Nathan

Daja. Nathan! Nathan!

Nathan. Well, how now?

Daja. He has appeared again! He has returned!

Nathan. Who, Daja? who has come again?

Daja. He! He!

Nathan. Well, he! But who? Why name him simply "he"?

That's not becoming, even if he is an angel.

Daja. He's pacing up and down amongst the palms,

And plucks as he goes by dates from the boughs.

Nathan. And eating?—and a Templar?

Daja. Why torment me?

Her eager looks through the close-column'd palms

Divined him ere they saw, and fixedly

Now follow him She begs, beseeches you

Without delay to seek him there. O hasten!

She from her window casement will make sign

Which way he turns, nearer or further off

Hasten!

Nathan. What, travel-stained, just as I lighted

From off the camel? Were that well? Go thou

In haste to him, tell him of my return

For think, the worthy man has but declined

Entering my doors in absence of the host,

And will come readily when he invites him.

Go, tell him I invite him heartily

Daja. Utterly vain! He will not, one word says it—

He darkens not the door of any Jew.

Nathan. Then go, if nothing more, to follow him:

Keep him in sight; your eyes accompany him.

I follow straight. [*Nathan goes in, and Daja out*]

SCENE V

SCENE: *An open space with palm-trees, amongst which the Templar walks up and down. A friar follows him at some distance on one side, seeming as if he would address him.*

Templar. He follows me as once before, and look,

See how he peers behind his hands! Good brother,

Should I perhaps say "Father"? Is it so?

Friar. "Brother," not more, lay-brother at your service.

Templar. Well, brother, if one self had anything!

But, as God lives, I have not—

Friar. None the less

Warm thanks, and God give thee a thousandfold

What thou wouldst joy to give. The will, the will

Makes givers, not the gift. Neither for alms
Was I sent after thee.

Templar. Yet, thou wert sent?

Friar. Yes, from the cloister.

Templar. Where I even now
Had hoped to find a simple pilgrim-meal?

Friar. The table was already laid; come only,
Come back, my lord, with me.

Templar. Whither? And why?

I have not eaten flesh for many a day;
What matters it? I find the dates are ripe.

Friar. Nay, let my lord beware of this cold fruit.
Unwholesome, for it much obstructs the spleen,
Thickens the blood, brings melancholy thoughts

Templar. I'm prone to melancholy and welcome it
But for this warning's sake you were not sent,
I know, to seek me.

Friar. No; it was to learn
Something about you, just to sound and probe you.

Templar. And this thou tell'st me boldly to my face?

Friar. Why not?

Templar. [*Aside*] Crafty brother! Has the cloister
More of thy kind?

Friar. I know not, my good lord,
I must obey.

Templar. And there, is it your custom
To listen and obey and never question?

Friar. Were it obedience else, I ask my lord?

Templar. (How near simplicity will come to truth!)
Confide, to me thou may'st, who is the man
Would know me better; not yourself I'll swear.

Friar. Would it become me or advantage me?

Templar. Then whom becomes it or advantages,
This eager prying?

Friar. Who's the inquisitor?

The Patriarch, I must believe—he 'twas
That sent me after you.

Templar. Knows he not, then, the red cross on white mantle?

Friar. Even to me 'tis known!

Templar. Well, Friar, listen;

I am a Templar and a prisoner.
Would you know more? Ta'en prisoner at Tebnin,
The fort which in the last hour of the truce

We thought to scale and then to rush on Sidon.
Yet more? taken with twenty, me alone
Saladin spared; with this the Patriarch knows
All he need know, and more ev'n than he need.

Friar. But scarcely more than he knew yesterday.

He would learn, too, the reason why my lord
Was pardoned by the Sultan, and he only.

Templar. Do I myself know why? Already I knelt,
My mantle on the ground, and with bared neck
Waited the stroke, when with a searching look
Saladin springs towards me, gives a sign;
They raise me and unfetter, when to thank him
I turn, his cheek is wet with teardrops; dumb
He stands, dumb I; he leaves me there. And now
What this strange story means, there ' that's a riddle
The Patriarch may guess at.

Friar. Thus he reads it—

That God for great things, great things has preserved you.

Templar. Yea, for great things indeed. To save from fire
A Jewish girl, to guide some curious pilgrims
To Sinai's mountain—great things truly!

Friar. “Great things”

Will come in time; meanwhile such trifles serve:
Perhaps the Patriarch himself has ready
Affairs of weightier import for my lord.

Templar. What, Friar! Mean you that? Has he said aught?
Whispered? Dropped hint?

Friar. Yea, not uncertainly;

Only my lord must first be probed to learn
Whether he's just the man.

Templar. Oh, merely probed!
(We'll see first how the probing goes!) Well, sir?

Friar. The short way is the best way—that my lord
Be told in plain terms what the Patriarch wills.

Templar. Speak out then plainly.

Friar. It would please him much

If by my lord into the proper hands
A letter might be brought.

Templar. By me? By me?

I am no errand-runner. And was this
The business planned, an employment worthier
Than snatching Jewish maiden from the flames?

Friar. Yea, and with reason. For, the Patriarch says,

That with this missive's import is bound up
Christendom's fortune. Says the Patriarch,
"Carry this letter safe, and earn a crown
Which by and by the King of Heaven will give,
A crown none," says the Patriarch, "is worthier
To wear than thou."

Templar. None worthier than I?

Friar. "For," says the Patriarch, "no man on earth
Can win this crown more certainly."

Templar. Than I?

Friar. "He hath full freedom here, goes everywhere,
Well understands how cities may be stormed
And how defended"—says the Patriarch—
"He best can judge the weakness or the strength
Of that new-builed inner battlement
Of Saladin and plainest describe it"—
So says the Patriarch—"to the host of God."

Templar. Good friar, were it right that I should hear
The content and the intent of the letter?

Friar. That know I not in its entirety
'Tis for King Philipp's hands. The Patriarch—
Often I wonder how a saint who else
Lives wholly in Heaven can stoop and condescend
To be so intimate with things o' the world.
For they must vex his soul.

Templar. Well, then, the Patriarch?

Friar. Knows with exactest certainty how, where,
And in what strength and from what quarter Saladin,
In case the truce be broken and strife renewed,
Opens afresh his campaign.

Templar. This he knows?

Friar. Yea, would be glad King Philipp also knew,
That, with this knowledge fortified, the King
Might judge the risk, whether so terrible
That at all costs the truce must be renewed
With Saladin, the truce your Order bravely
Hath broken already.

Templar. What a Patriarch!

The dear man wants no common messenger
In me; he wants a spy. Well, good friar,
Tell this your Patriarch: that when you probed me
You found me useless; that I hold myself
A prisoner still; and more, that the one calling

Of Templars ever was to drive the foe
With naked spear, never—to play the spy.

Friar I thought as much! and will not blame my lord.

The best is yet to come. The Patriarch
Lately has gathered how the hold is named,
And where it lies in Lebanon, wherein
The untold sums are hid that Saladin's
Provident father stores to pay the army
And face the war's expense. Now, Saladin
From time to time to this stronghold resorts
By ways remote, with meagre company;
Perceiv'st thou?

Templar. No, not I.

Friar. A simple thing
To ambush then the Sultan, take him captive,
And give him his quietus; what were easier?
You shudder? Two God-fearing Maronites
Offer the deed, if once some gallant man
Were found to guide them.

Templar. And the Patriarch
Has chosen me to act the gallant man?

Friar He thinks King Philipp then from Ptolemais
Would surely send his aid.

Templar. Friar! To me?
To me? Hast thou not heard, or hear'st thou now
For the first time what debt of obligation
Binds me to Saladin?

Friar. I've heard the tale.

Templar. And still?

Friar. The Patriarch thinks that's well enough,
But God's rights and your Order . . .

Templar. These change nothing!
Suggest me not a knave's trick.

Friar. No, good faith!

Only the Patriarch thinks a knavish trick
In man's sight needeth not be so in God's.

Templar That I might owe my life to Saladin,
And yet take his?

Friar. O fie! The Patriarch thinks

That Saladin were still a foe to Christ,
Therefore can have no claim to be your friend.

Templar. Friend? Since I will not play the villain to him,
The thankless villain?

Friar. Why, of course, of course !

The Patriarch's mind is, we are quit of thanks,
Quit before God and man, when service done
Was not for our sake done, and rumour tells,
Saladin spared you for that he discerned
His brother's likeness in your look and ways.

Templar. Ah, this too knows the Patriarch, and still ?

Would it were true ! Ah, Sultan Saladin !
How ? Nature framed in me one feature only
After your brother's pattern, should not then
Something within me answer to the same ?
And shall this something in my soul be shifted
To please a Patriarch ? No, Nature, no !
Thou dost not lie ! God does not contradict
Himself in His own works ! Hence, friar, hence !
Wake not my anger ; leave me to my thoughts.

Friar. I go ; and I go happier than I came.
My lord will pardon me. We cloister people
Are under rule, we must obey the heads.

SCENE VI

The Templar and Daja, who has been observing the Templar at a distance for some time, and now approaches him.

Daja. The friar, methinks, left him in no good humour.
But I must chance my errand.

Templar. Excellent !
Who says the proverb lies—that monk and woman,
Woman and monk, are Beelzebub's two claws ?
To-day he flings me from the one to the other.

Daja. What do I see ? You, my brave knight ? Thank God !
I thank Him for His grace ! So long a time
You have been hidden. You have not been, I'll hope,
Retired in sickness ?

Templar. No.
Daja. In health, then ?

Templar. Yes.

Daja. We have been deep in trouble for your sake.

Templar. So ?

Daja. Surely wert on a journey ?

Templar. You have guessed it !

Daja. And art to-day returned ?

Templar. No; yesterday.

Daja. To-day, too, Recha's father is returned,
And surely Recha now dare hope?

Templar. For what?

Daja. For what she prayed of you so often. Come;
Her father now himself most pressingly
Invites you. He has come from Babylon,
A train of richly-laden camels with him,
And everything that's costliest in spices,
Jewels and stuffs that only India,
Persia and Syria or China can provide.

Templar. I'm not a buyer.

Daja. He's honoured of his people.
As princes are, and yet, I wonder often
Their title of honour is "Nathan the Wise,"
And not "Nathan the Rich."

Templar. Ah! to his people
Are *rich* and *wise* perhaps identical.

Daja. Rather "the Good" should they have named him. For
It's not expressible how good he is.
That moment when he learned what Recha owed you
What would he not have done for you, or given!

Templar. Ay!

Daja. But try, but come and see!

Templar. What then? How fast
A moment passes!

Daja. Think, were it not so,
Were he not this good man, that I so long
Had dwelt within his gates? Think you perhaps
That I forget my worth as Christian?
O no, it was not sung beside my cradle
That I should company my lawful spouse
Only for this to Palestine, to tend
A Jewish maiden. A noble squire my spouse
In Kaiser Friedrich's host.

Templar. And was by birth
A Swiss on whom the honour was bestowed
With his Imperial Majesty to drown
I' the self-same river-bed; woman, how often
Already have you told me this same tale?
Will you not cease at last, then, to pursue me?

Daja. Pursue? O gracious God!

Templar. Yes, yes, pursue.

And once for all I will not see you more,
 Nor hear ! nor have recalled thus endlessly
 A deed in which my thoughts had never part,
 Which when I think of it becomes a riddle
 Ev'n to myself. Regret it I must not—
 But see, if such should hap again ; your fault
 It were, if I should act less rashly, should
 Enquire beforehand—and let burn, what would.

Daja That, God forbid !

Templar. I beg you from to-day
 Do me at least this favour know me no longer.
 For Jew is Jew. And keep the father off.
 I'm a rough hind. Long since the maiden's image
 Passed from my soul, if it was ever there.

Daja Ah ! but from her soul yours hath never passed.

Templar. What, then, is one to do ? Say what
Daja Who knows !
 Men are not always what they seem.

Templar. Yet seldom
 Anything better. [*He turns to go.*]

Daja. But wait a moment. Why
 This haste ?

Templar. Woman, these palms I loved and their green shade,
 You make them hateful. [*Exit.*]

Daja Go then, German bear !
 Go ! Yet I follow, not to lose the trail.

[*Follows at a distance*]

ACT II—SCENE I

SCENE : *The Sultan's Palace. Saladin and Sittah at chess.*

Sittah. Where now, where are you, Saladin ? You dream.

Saladin. I thought the move a good one.

Sittah. Good perhaps
 For me ; but take it back.

Saladin. Why, then ?
Sittah. The knight

Is left uncovered.

Saladin. True. Well, then, so !

Sittah. That forks your pieces.

Saladin. Well, then, I call check !

Sittah. How does that help you? See, I cover it,
And you are as you were.

Saladin. From this dilemma,
I see no way but sacrifice. Let be!
Take you the knight.

Sittah. I want him not, I pass.

Saladin. Thank you for nothing. better strategy
Prompts you to leave the knight in place.

Sittah. May be.

Saladin. Make not your reckoning without the host.
See! Do you overlook what you would gain?

Sittah. By no means. For I could not think you held
So lightly of your queen.

Saladin. I, of my queen?

Sittah. I see quite well to-day I shall not win
My thousand dinars—no, not even a heller.

Saladin. How so?

Sittah. Canst ask? Because with all your cunning
And all your skill you mean to lose. But that
I have no mind to, for besides such sport
Is not quite entertaining, did I not ever
Win most with you in games that I have lost?
For then to comfort me for my lost game
You gave me twice the stake.

Saladin. Then, sister dear,
You should have tried with all your might to lose.

Sittah. It well may be, at least, your liberal hand,
Dear brother, bears the blame if I play ill.

Saladin. We'll stop the game 'tis late, we'll make an end.

Sittah. And leave it so? Then check! and double check!

Saladin. Truly I had no thought of such a check—

That takes my queen as well. . . .

Sittah. Could it be helped?
Let's see.

Saladin. No, no; I must resign the queen.
Never with this piece was I fortunate.

Sittah. With this piece only?

Saladin. Take it off?—No good!
For so all is protected as before.

Sittah. How courteously one must behave to queens

You've taught me often . . .

[*Lets it stand.*]

Saladin. Take it or take it not.

I have no move.

Sittah. But take, what need of that?

Check ! Check !

Saladin. Proceed.

Sittah. Well, check ! and check ! and check !

Saladin. And mate !

Sittah. Not quite, for you can move that man
Between, or make what move you will ; no matter.

Saladin. Right ! you have won : Al-Hafi straight will pay,
Let him be called Sittah, you guessed the truth ;
My mind was not i' the game : I was distracted.
Besides, who gives us aye these polished pieces
Perpetually ? all smoothed away to nothing.
What matter ? Losing needs excuse. But not
The uniform'd pieces, Sittah, made me lose ;
Your art, your swift and quiet glance . . .

Sittah. Even so

You try to soothe the smart of the lost game.

Enough ! you were distracted, more than I.

Saladin. Than you ? What had you to distract you ?

Sittah. Truly

Not your distractions. O my Saladin,
When shall we play so eagerly again ?

Saladin. All the more eagerly when occasion comes !

Ah ! since the war resumes, you mean. Well, let it !

On ! on ! I have not sought it. Willingly

Had I prolonged anew our armistice, and gladly,

How gladly first had found a manly spouse

For my dear Sittah, and that were Richard's brother

Brother of Richard, think !

Sittah. Your Richard's praise

Is ever on your lips !

Saladin. If brother Melek

Had, after, Richard's sister for his mate :

Ha ! what a house together ! Of the first,

Best houses in the world the best and first.

You find I am not slack in my self-praise,

Deeming me not unworthy of my friends—

Ah, 'spousals such as these would bring us men !

Sittah. Have I not often laughed at your fair dream ?

You know not Christians, nay, you will not know them.

Their pride is to be Christians, not to be men ;

For even that which from their Founder's day

Hath seasoned superstition—humanity—
They love, not for its human quality,
But that Christ taught it, that Christ did the like—
Well for them that He was a man so good;
Well for them they can take in utter faith
His virtues ! But what virtues ? Not His virtues,
No, but His Name, which must be spread world-wide
To cloud with slander and obliterate
The names of all good men. The Name alone
Is everything.

Saladin. Why else, you mean, should they require
Both you and Melek take the name of Christian
Ere Christians will permit you talk of marriage.

Sittah. Even so ! As if by Christians only love
Were to be looked for, love wherewith the Maker
Endowed woman and man.

Saladin. Christians believe
So many pitiful things that they can swallow
Even this ! And yet there you mistake. The Templars—
They are the cause ; they, they alone by whom
Our hopes are frustrate : they will not let go
That pleasant town which should be brought to Melek
By Richard's sister as her bridal dower ;
They fix their claws on Acre. And not to lose
The privilege of the knight, they play the monk,
The simple monk. And thinking they may shoot
A fortunate arrow at the bird in flight,
They scarce can wait the passing of the truce.
So be it ! I'm prepared. On, gentlemen !
If all besides were only as it should be.

Sittah. Ah, what, then, troubles you ? What goes not straight ?
What makes you tremble ?

Saladin. Even that which for so long
Has made me tremble. I was in Lebanon—
Our father, our good father, is succumbing
To his sore burdens.

Sittah. O, 'tis pitiful !

Saladin. He can no more. 'Tis pressure everywhere ;
Where'er we look is failure.

Sittah. What, then, fails ?
What presses ?

Saladin. What I almost scorn to name ;
What when I have it seems superfluous,

Even if the queen is taken, you are not therefore

Check-mated . . .

Saladin [*Steps up and throws the pieces down.*] Yes, I am, and wish it so.

Al-Hafi. I see, to play's to win, and payment follows.

Saladin. [*To Sittah.*] What says he? What?

Sittah. [*From time to time signing to Al-Hafi.*] You know him : how he loves

To oppose and be petitioned. Envious too,

Or I mistake him.

Saladin. Surely not of you—

Not of my sister. What is this, my Hafi?

Envious?

Al-Hafi. Maybe, maybe; gladly I'd have

Myself a brain like hers, and such a heart.

Sittah. And yet he ever pays in honesty,

And will to-day : leave him alone for that !

But go, Al-Hafi, go ! Shortly I'll send

To fetch the money.

Al-Hafi. No ; for further part

In this mad mummery is not for me.

Sooner or later he must learn the truth.

Saladin. Learn? Who? and what?

Sittah Is't thus you keep your promise,

Al-Hafi? Break not oaths !

Al-Hafi. How could I think

That it would go so far?

Saladin. Well ! What's in hand?

Am I not to be told?

Sittah. I conjure you, Al-Hafi, be discreet.

Saladin. This is most strange ! This solemn, earnest prayer

Speaks Sittah to a stranger, to a Dervish,

And not to me, her brother. Solve the riddle,

Al-Hafi, I command you. Speak out, Dervish !

Sittah. Let not a trifle, brother, trouble your spirit :

More than its meanness warrants. Once or twice

Of late, you know, I won from you at chess

Just such a stake, and since I have no need

At present for such moneys ; since, besides,

Al-Hafi's treasure-chest is not too full,

And posts have not arrived. But trouble not,

For I'll not make it a present to you, brother,

Not yet to Hafi or his treasure-chest.

Al-Hafi. Ah ! were it only that !

Sittah. And some such trifles.

That, too, 's untouched which once you set apart

For me ; for some few months untouched it lies.

Al-Hafi. That is not all.

Saladin. Not all ? Then will you tell me ?

Al-Hafi. Since we have waited for the gold from Egypt

Hath she . . .

Sittah. Why hear him ?

Al-Hafi. Hath she not only

Ta'en nothing . . .

Saladin. The good girl ! she has besides

Helped from her own. Is't so ?

Al-Hafi. Yea, all the court

She hath maintained, herself alone hath borne

Your whole expenditure.

Saladin. Ha ! that's my sister !

[*Embracing her.*]

Sittah. Who made me rich enough for this but you,

Brother ?

Al-Hafi. Who'll make you soon as beggar-poor

As he himself is.

Saladin. Poor ? the brother poor ?

When had I more ? or when have I had less ?

One coat, one sword, one charger, and—one God.

What want I more ? And when shall these come short ?

Yet, Hafi, I could chide you.

Sittah. Do not chide,

Brother ; if only I could lighten as much

Our father's burden—

Saladin. Ah ! Ah ! there you strike

My joy again to earth ! Though for myself

I nothing lack, nor can lack. Ha, 'tis he

Whose want is sorest, and with him we suffer.

What shall I do ? From Egypt our supplies

Delay their coming, we may wait them long,

And why, God knows : for all is quiet there.

Cut down, draw in, and spare—that will I gladly ;

Nothing will please me better, if alone

Thereby I suffer, and none else. What helps it ?

I still must have my horse, my coat, my sword.

And with my God 'tis easy bargaining.

For He is satisfied with one small gift,

Which is my soul—Much I had reckoned, Hafi,
Upon the surplus in thy treasure-chest.

Al-Hafi. Surplus? Yourself confess I had been strangled,
Perhaps impaled had you in vain demanded
Of bankrupt me this surplus. Fraud, embezzlement,
Were then my one resource.

Saladin. Now, what remains?
But tell me, Hafi, why you turn to Sittah
And borrow her small store : are there not others ?

Sittah. And could I see this privilege torn from me,
To further you, my brother? No, this joy
I'll not surrender till I must : my fortunes
Are not yet foundered quite.

Saladin. Only not quite !
It wanted only this ! Hafi, at once
Contrive, take up from whom you can, nor halt
On nice considering of means and ways :
Go, borrow, pledge. Yet, Hafi, borrow not
Of those whom I made rich. To borrow of them
Might seem reclaiming. Ask the covetous,
For they will be the readiest ; they know well
How fast with me their moneys multiply.

Al-Hafi. I know none such.

Sittah. Hafi, did I not hear
Your friend from his far journey had returned
To his own dwelling?

Al-Hafi. Friend? My friend? To whom
Give you that name?

Sittah. Your much-belauded Jew.

Al-Hafi. Belauded Jew ! Lauded by me?

Sittah. Whom God—
Such were the terms that once you used of him—
Whom God of all the good things of this world,
With least and greatest in abundancy
Had crowned.

Al-Hafi. And said I so? What meant I then
By that?

Sittah. The least was, Wealth ; the greatest, Wisdom.

Al-Hafi. How? Of a Jew? I said so of a Jew?

Sittah. What would you not have said of your good Nathan?

Al-Hafi. Oh ! 'tis of him ! of Nathan ! Has he truly

At last returned again? If this be so,
Surely his journey prospered. And 'tis true

The folk call him the Wise, call him the Rich.

Sittah. Yea, more than ever now he's called the Rich.

And the whole city hums of rarities,

The stuffs and jewels in his caravan.

Al-Hafi. So then it is the Rich has come again ;

And with him comes, who knows ? the Wise as well.

Sittah. What think you, Hafi ? Could not you approach him ?

Al-Hafi. For what, suppose you ? Not to borrow, surely ?

Ah, there you touch him ! Nathan lend ? His wisdom

Lies just in this · that he will lend to no man.

Sittah. That's not the picture once you drew of him.

Al-Hafi. To men in utmost need he lendeth goods—

But money ? money never ! Tho' for the rest

He's such a Jew as there be seldom found.

Has brains, knows how to live, can play good chess,

But marks him out in bad points as in good

From other Jews. I warn you, reckon not

On him. 'Tis to the poor he gives, to them

Even with open hand like Saladin,

If not so largely, with as good a will ;

Without respect of persons Christian and Jew,

And Mussulman and Parsee, all is one

To him.

Sittah. And such a man . . .

Saladin. How comes it, then,

I have not known this man, nor heard his name ?

Sittah. Would he not lend to Saladin ? To him,

To him who only cares for others' wants,

Not for his own ?

Al-Hafi. Herein you see the Jew,

The common, vulgar Jew ! And yet, believe me,

He envies you the most on score of giving,

So jealous is he, grasping, for himself,

At all God's-hire that offers in the world ;

And 'tis for this alone he lends to none :

That he have more to give. His reason, this !

That Charity is in the law commanded,

The law commands not to oblige a neighbour ;

So Charity itself has made him quite

The least obliging friend in all the world.

In truth, of late I am in ill accord

With him. Still, think not therefore I will speak

Unjustly of him, good and true-hearted he,
Everyway good, except for only this.
No, not for this. I'll go at once and knock
At other doors . . . and I have just bethought me
Of a rich Moor, a covetous man—I go !

Sittah Hafi, what needs your haste ?

Saladin.

O, let him ! Let him !

SCENE III

Sittah Saladin

Sittah. What haste he makes, as though he were rejoiced
If he could so escape me. What means that ?
Has he in truth deceived himself in Nathan,
Or would perhaps deceive us ?

Saladin. How deceive ?

You question me who hardly know of whom
The talk was, me who never heard until to-day
Of this your Jew, your Nathan.

Sittah Is it possible

A man remained hid from you who, they say
Has found the graves of David and Solomon,
And with a mighty secret word can break
Their seals ? and then bring forth from time to time
To daylight treasures inexhaustible
No meaner source could furnish.

Saladin. His wealth if this man finds in graves, 'tis sure
They're not the graves of Solomon and David.
Fools lie there buried !

Sittah Criminals, mayhap !

Besides, his wealth's source is more fertile far,
More inexhaustible than any grave
Of Mammon.

Saladin He's a merchant, so you told me.

Sittah All highways are his mule-tracks, every waste
Has seen his caravans, his vessels lie
In all the havens. So Al-Hafi to me once
Declared, and added, with a joyful pride
How greatly, nobly this his friend employed
What in his wisdom he did not disdain
To gather by his diligence, and added, too,
How free from prejudice his soul, how open

His heart to every virtue, how attuned
To all things beautiful. Ah ! how he praised him.

Saladin. Yet Hafi spoke of him uncertainly,
And coldly . . .

Sittah. No, not coldly, but perplexed.
As though he held it dangerous to praise him,
And could not blame him undeservedly.
Or might it not be that the noblest Jew
Cannot deny his kindred, is still Jew ;
That Hafi for this feature is ashamed
Of his dear friend ? Be't with him as it may,
The Jew be more Jew or be less, what matter
If only rich ? This is enough for us !

Saladin. And yet you would not, sister, take from him
By force what is his own ?

Sittah. What call you force ?
With fire and sword ? No, no, what violence
But their own weakness need we with the weak ?
But come a moment now into my harem
And hear a singer-girl whom yesterday
I bought. Meantime perhaps a shrewd design
I have upon this Nathan will grow ripe—
Come.

SCENE IV

In front of Nathan's house, where it is close to the palm trees.

Enter Recha and Nathan. To them Daja

Recha. O, you've tarried long, my father. Hardly now
Can we have hope to meet him . . .

Nathan. Never fear ;
If not among the palms, then elsewhere
We find him. Only calm yourself And see,
Is that not Daja this way hastening ?

Recha. But she has lost him, that is all too certain.

Nathan. Why so ?

Recha. For then she'd come with speedier foot.

Nathan. She has not seen us yet, perhaps.

Recha. O now
She sees us.

Nathan. Look ! with quicken'd pace she comes.
Only be calm, be calm !

Recha. But could you wish
A daughter who were calm in such a case?
Untroubled for his weal whose great deed saved
Her life—her life that's only dear to her
Because to you she owes it.

Nathan. O my wish
Is not to have you other than you are :
Even if I knew that something new and strange
Stirred in your loving heart.

Recha. What, then, my father?
Nathan. What ask you? Are you then so shy with me?
What's passing now deep in your inmost soul
Is innocence and nature. Let it not
Trouble your spirit ; mine it does not trouble.
But promise me that when your heart has spoken
With clearer voice, you will not hide from me
Your wishes.

Recha. Nay, the possibility
Nigh makes me tremble—the thought that I might wish
To veil my thoughts from you.

Nathan. No more of this.
'Tis done with once for all. And here is Daja—
Well?

Daja. Still he walks among the palms, and soon
Will come by yonder hedge. Look, there he comes !

Recha. Ah ! and appears unsure which path to take.
Whither? if right? if left? uphill or down?

Daja. No, no ; he'll take the footway round the cloister
Yet once or twice, and then he needs must pass
Hereby.—What matter?

Recha. Have you spoken with him
Already? How is he to-day?

Daja. As ever.

Nathan. Carefully ! Warily ! Do not be seen.
Step back a pace or two : Rather, go in.

Recha. Just one more look ! just one, but ah ! the hedge.
It steals him from me.

Daja. Come ! the father's right.
You run the danger that if he but sees you,
Upon the spot he'll turn.

Recha. Ah me ! the hedge !

Nathan. If he turn suddenly by it, infallibly
He'll spy you. So go in, go in.

Daja. Come, Recha;
I know a window where we're safe.
Recha. So, Daja?

[*The two go in.*]

SCENE V

Nathan and presently the Templar

Nathan. Almost I shrink from this strange man. And almost
His rugged virtues shake me. That one man
Should thus be able to perplex another!
He comes By Heaven! A stripling like a man
I love right well this strong, defiant glance!
And this brave carriage Sure the shell alone
Is bitter here, and not the kernel. Where,
Where have I seen one like him? Pardon me,
My noble Frank . . .

Templar. What say'st thou?

Nathan. Pardon me . . .

Templar. What, Jew? Why pardon?

Nathan That I venture thus
To greet you.

Templar Can I hinder? But be brief.

Nathan. Forgive me Pass not by so hastily
And with so scornful brows; slight him not thus
Whom you have bound to you eternally.

Templar. How bound? Ah, almost I guess! You are . . .

Nathan. My name is Nathan, am that maiden's father
Whom your brave heart delivered from the fire;
And come to . . .

Templar. If to thank me—spare your pains!
I have endured for this mere trifle's sake
Too heavy a load of thanks. Assuredly
You owe me nothing, nothing. Could I know
This maiden was your daughter? 'Tis our rule,
The Templars' duty, thus to run to the aid
Of whomsoever in the hour of stress.
Moreover, at that moment to my soul
My life was burdensome. How gladly, then,
I rushed to snatch the opportunity
Thus for another's life to chance my own,
Another's, were it but a Jewish girl.

Nathan. Yes, that's the hero's way, to do great deeds

And yet not boast of them, but to hide rather
Behind a modest shame t'avoid applause :
But when he thus disdains the offering
Of grateful praise, tell me what offering then
Will he not scorn? And, Knight! were you not here
A stranger and a captive, not thus boldly
I'd put you to the question. Speak, command :
How can I serve you?

Templar. Serve me? In no wise.

Nathan. See! I am rich.

Templar. But rich Jew never was
With me the better Jew.

Nathan. Would you for that
Decline what notwithstanding he possesses
Of good, and take no help of his full hands?

Templar. Nay, as for that, I'll speak no austere vows
Even for my mantle's sake. When it shall be
Not part, as now, but wholly rags threadbare,
When seam nor stitches longer hold, I'll come
And borrow of you something for a new one,
Money or stuff—Nay, eye me not so close,
You're still secure, 'tis not yet so far gone.
'Tis still in fair condition; just one spot
Here on the lappet's foul—where it was singed.
And that it got when out of the fierce flame
I bore your daughter.

Nathan. [*Who seizes the lappet and gazes at it.*] Now 'tis
wonderful

That such a foul spot, such a touch of fire
Should bear the man a better testimony
Than his own mouth. Now would I kiss it straight,
This rusty fleck! Forgive me; 'twas not wilful.

Templar. What?

Nathan. 'Twas a tear fell on it.

Templar. That's no matter!
Has had more drops than that.—(This Jew will soon,
I fear, bewilder me)

Nathan. Were I too bold
To beg such kindness, that you once would send
Your mantle to my child?

Templar. Why, for what purpose?

Nathan. That she, too, press her lips upon this fleck.
For she now wishes, though the hope is vain,

Herself to embrace your knees.

Templar.

But, Jew—

Your name is Nathan?—Truly, Nathan, you have spoken
To me such words—so kind—so delicate

You have startled me . . . but certainly . . . I would . . .

Nathan. Pose and disguise you, as you will. Even here

I find you out. You were too good, too modest,

To be more courteous. For—the girl, all feeling;

Her woman-ambassador, all zeal to serve;

The father far removed—your only care

Was all for her good name; you fled temptation,

Fled, that you might not conquer · now I thank you—

Templar. I see you know how Templar Knights should think,

Nathan. And only Templars? only they? and only

Because the Order's rule commands it so?

I know how good men think, and I know too

All lands bear good men

Templar.

Yet, with difference?

Nathan. O true, difference in colour, dress and form.

Templar. But more or fewer in the different climes.

Nathan. I hold that this distinction is but small.

Everywhere great men need great spheres, and when

Too thick they're planted, they then break away

Their branches. But the medium men like us,

On the other hand, are everywhere in crowds.

Only, the one must not abase the other;

Only, the halt must tolerate the lame;

Only, the hillock must not vaunt itself,

Or think it the one summit in the world.

Templar. Most nobly said! But know you not the people

That first abased all others? Know you not

What nation first of all proclaimed itself

The Chosen Race? How, if I could not cease

This people, not indeed to hate—not hate—

But for their pride to dis-esteem? Their pride

Which they bequeathed to Muslim and to Christian,

That their God was the true God, and theirs only!

You start to hear a Christian and a Templar

Speak thus. But tell me when and where this madness,

This pious rage to have the better God,

And to impose this better God as best

On the whole world, more in its blackest form

Been shown than here and now? From whose dimmed eyes

The scales fall not? But yet be blind, who will !

Forget what I have said, and let me go. [*Is going.*]

Nathan. Ha ! know you not with how far firmer grasp
I now would hold you. Come, we must, we must
Be friends. Despise my people if you will.
Nor I nor you have chosen our people. Are we
Our people? People? What means then the people?
Are Jew and Christian rather Jew and Christian
Than men? Ah, had I found in you one more
Whom it suffices to be called a Man !

Templar. And so, by God, Nathan, you have, you have
Your hand ! am shamed to have mistaken you
Even for a moment.

Nathan. And I'm proud of it.

Only the common rarely is misjudged.

Templar. And what is rare one seldom can forget,
Yes, Nathan, yes ; we must, we must be friends.

Nathan. Already are. My Recha will rejoice !

And what a happy future opens up
Before my vision ! You must know her first.

Templar. My heart's on fire within.—Who rushes yonder
Forth of your threshold? Is it not your Daja?

Nathan. Yes surely, and in trouble.

Templar. Can it be
Mishap befallen our Recha?

SCENE VI

The former, and Daja in haste

Daja. Nathan ! Nathan !

Nathan. Well?

Daja. Forgive me, noble Knight, that I break in
Thus on your converse.

Nathan. Well, what is't?

Templar. What is't?

Daja. A message from the Sultan : he would speak
With you. My God ! the Sultan !

Nathan. Me? the Sultan?

Curious perhaps to see what novelties
I have brought home. Say only there's but little
Or almost nought unpacked.

Daja. O Nathan, no ;

* He will see nothing, he will speak with you,—
With you in person, now, with no delay.

Nathan. I come at once. Do you return to Recha.

Daja. Take it not ill of us, worshipful Knight,—
God, we are troubled, guessing not what means
The Sultan.

Nathan. That we'll learn Go, only go !

SCENE VII

Nathan and the Templar

Templar. You do not know him yet ; I mean, in person ?

Nathan. The Sultan ? No, not yet, though I have never
Avoided him, nor have I sought to meet him,
So loud the general voice spoke in his praise,
That I must rather wish to think it just,
Than see. But now, even were it otherwise—
He has, by sparing of your life . . .

Templar. Ah, true ;
That certainly is truth ; the life I live
It is his gift—

Nathan. And thereby gave he me
A double, threefold life. This, I confess,
Has altered all between us ; thrown a cord
At once about me, binding me to him,
And to his service. Scarce now can I wait
To know what he commands me ; ready for all
Am I ; and ready, too, to tell him what
I do is for your sake.

Templar. Nor I myself
Have yet had chance to thank him, and have crossed
Ofttimes his path in vain : for that impress
I made on him came like a lightning flash
And vanished even as quickly ; who can tell
Whether he has me still in memory ?
And yet he must, once more at least, recall me
To fix my fate. 'Tis not enough that I
Still live at his command, and by his will :
I must await the word, after what rule
And what direction I must spend my days.

Nathan. Doubtless, and therefore I delay no longer.
Perhaps a word will fall may give occasion

To speak of you. Permit me, pardon me—
I hasten thither. When, when shall we see you
Within my gates?

Templar. When may I?

Nathan. When you will

Templar. To-day, then.

Nathan. And your name, if I may ask?

Templar. My name was, sometime, Curd von Stauffen—Curd!

Nathan. Von Stauffen? Stauffen? Stauffen?

Templar. You are startled?

Why start you?

Nathan. Stauffen? Branches of this house,

I know, are many.

Templar. Here in this very soil

Do several rest and rot of this same race.

My uncle—nay, my father as I call him—

Is one—Why turn on me a gaze so keen,

So searching?

Nathan. Nothing! nothing! How can I

Grow tired of seeing you? And for this cause

I leave you.

Templar. Searcher's eyes not seldom find

More than they seek for. Nathan, this gives me pause.

Let our acquaintance build on gradual time,

Not prying upon glances.

[*Goes off.*]

Nathan. What said he?

"Searchers find often more than they desire."

As if he read my soul! 'Tis even so.

This might befall me also.—Not alone

Wolf's figure and Wolf's walk; but his voice, too;

The carriage of his head—Wolf to the life;

And how he bare his sword upon the arm

And stroked his eyebrows, as did Wolf, to hide

The ardour of his gaze, so full of fire.

How such sharp-printed pictures yet can sleep

At whiles within, till word or tone recalls them.

Von Stauffen! right, 'tis right; Filnek and Stauffen—

I'll search this soon to the depths, but first must I

To Saladin. But how? Is not that Daja

Lurking and listening? Come, my Daja, come.

SCENE VIII

Daja. Nathan

Nathan. What now? Something, to-day, pricks both your hearts
Quite other news to know than what the Sultan
Will ask of me.

Daja And do you blame her for it?
You had begun to talk in friendlier mood
That moment when the Sultan's message came
And drove us from the window.

Nathan. Tell her now
That any moment she may look for him;
He promised this.

Daja. For sure? for sure?

Nathan. My Daja,
I trust you and will trust. Be on your guard,
Be dutiful, be true, leave no regrets
For after conscience—See that you destroy not
One point of all my plan. Only relate
And question still with maiden modesty
And due reserve . . .

Daja. That you at such an hour
Could yet remember this! I go; and you
Must also, for, behold! there comes in haste
From Saladin a second messenger,
Al-Hafi, your good Dervish.

SCENE IX

Nathan. Al-Hafi

Al-Hafi. Ha, ha! the very man whom I was seeking.

Nathan. Is there such haste? What asks he at my hands?

Al-Hafi. Who?

Nathan. Saladin. Tell him I come! I come!

Al-Hafi. To whom? To Saladin?

Nathan. Has he not sent you?

Al-Hafi. Me? No; already has his message come?

Nathan. Yea, verily.

Al-Hafi. Then everything is right.

Nathan. What? What is right?

Al-Hafi. That no blame lights on me :

God knows I'm not to blame What have I not

Said, whispered, lied of you to turn it off?

Nathan. To turn what off? What's this that you call right?

Al-Hafi. That you're his right-hand now, his Chancellor.

I pity you. Yet second thoughts forbid.

For from this hour I go; go, you have heard

Already whither, and you know the road.

Upon the way can I do ought for you?

Am at your service. It must be only what

One naked can drag with him. Speak: I go.

Nathan. Bethink you now, *Al-Hafi*, once bethink you;

That I as yet know nothing of these things

Whereof you're voluble. What means it all?

Al-Hafi. But you will bring the sack along with you.

Nathan. Sack?

Al-Hafi. Well, the gold you'll lend to Saladin.

Nathan. And is this all?

Al-Hafi. Perhaps I should look on

And watch him bleed you to the very toes?

And see the waste of his sweet charity

Draw from the once-full barns and draw again

Until the wretched aborigines,

Ev'n the poor mice, are starved? Perhaps you dream

That he who's thirsty for your gold will take

Your counsel also? Ha! he follow counsel!

Since when has Saladin suffered advice?

Think rather, *Nathan*, what's just chanced to me.

Nathan. What, then?

Al-Hafi. I came on him as he played chess

With sister *Sittah*: she's a clever player;

And the game Saladin imagined lost

Stood yet upon the board. I gave a glance

And saw the contest neither lost nor won.

Nathan. For you a find indeed! You trembled then.

Al-Hafi. A move with king on pawn was all required

To give her check. If I could only show you!

Nathan. I well can trust you there.

Al-Hafi. For so the rook

Were freed, and she were done. This I would show him,

And call him. Think!

Nathan. He was not of your mind?

Al-Hafi. He would not listen, and contemptuously

He brushed the game down.

Nathan.

Is it possible?

Al-Hafi. Saying, for once at least he'd take checkmate;

He wished it. Is that play?

Nathan.

Hardly, in sooth:

'Tis playing with the play.

Al-Hafi.

Like that, it's worth

A rotten filbert.

Nathan.

Money here or there!

That is the least. But not to listen to you,

Upon so weighty a point not once to listen,

Not to admire your eagle vision! That,

That cries out, think you not, for its revenge?

Al-Hafi. You jest! I told you this that you might know

The kind of brain he is; brief, in one word,

His whimsies weary me, and I have done.

Here am I running among filthy Moors

To ask the use of filthy purses. I,

Who never in my days begged for myself,

Am now for others borrowing. Borrowing's as bad

Almost as begging, and the lending so

At usury as bad almost as theft.

Amongst my people by the Ganges shore

I shall need neither, nor need I be

Of either, instrument For by the Ganges,

The Ganges only you'll find men, but here

No man save you were worthy of the boon

To live by Ganges shore. Come you with me.

Leave Saladin the plunder, at his will.

He'll bring you step by step to beggary,

And all your baggage with you. For a guide

And warrantor I'll stand. I pray you, come.

Nathan. Methinks, indeed, 't might be our last resort.

Yet, Hafi, I must ponder it. Wait you . . .

Al-Hafi. Ponder it? Such things abide no pondering.

Nathan. Only till I return from Saladin;

Till leave-takings . . .

Al-Hafi.

To hesitate and ponder

But asks excuses not to dare. The man

Who cannot at a wink decide to live

His self-poised life, must live another's slave

For ever. As you will! Farewell, as seems

You best. My way lies yonder: your way here.

Nathan. Hafi ! You'll settle first your treasurership ?

Al-Hafi. A jest. The total of my treasure-chest
Is not worth reckoning. And for my account
Yourself or Sittah shall be warranty—
Farewell !

[*Exit.*

Nathan. Be warrant for him ! Yes, I know him
Savage and kind and faithful, the true beggar,
When all is said, is the one genuine King !

ACT III—SCENE I

In Nathan's house. Recha and Daja

Recha. Daja, what were my father's words to-day ?

“ I might expect him any moment now ” ?
Surely that sounds as though he might at once
Appear. Has not a world of moments gone ?
Ah, well, who thinks of moments that are fled ?
In each “ next minute ” I'm resolved to live ;
That one will surely come that brings him here.

Daja. O that accursed message of the Sultan !

But for it Nathan would have brought him straightway.

Recha. And when this longed-for moment has arrived,
With its fulfilment of my tenderest wish—
What then ? what then ?

Daja. What then ? Why, then, I hope

The tenderest of *my* wishes too shall move
To its fulfilling.

Recha. What can take its place
Then, in my heart, that will have quite unlearned
To throb without some one o'ermastering wish ?
If nothing—that were terror !

Daja. My, my wish

Will enter then the place of that fulfilled ;
My wish to know you in safe hands, in Europe,
In hands all worthy to have *you* in keeping.

Recha. Strangely deceived ! For what makes this wish yours,
The same forbids it ever should be mine.
Your country is the magnet which attracts you,
And shall my own, my own not hold me back ?
Shall the image of your loved ones vividly
Rise on your inward vision, and prevail,

More than mine round me, seen and felt and known?

Daja. Struggle you will, but struggle as you will,
The ways of Heaven are still the ways of Heaven.
What if it were then he who rescued you,
Through whom his God for Whom he fights should lead you
Back to the soil whose daughter you were born?

Recha. Daja, you speak most strangely; your wild brain
Does breed the queerest fancies. His? "His God"
"For Whom he fights." Then whom does God belong to?
What kind of God who to one man belongs,
Who needs be fought for by His worshippers?—
Nay; who shall tell for what soil we were born
If just that spot where we were really born
Not claims us? If my father heard you speak!
What would he do to you, who image ever
My happiness removed afar from him?
What do to you, finding you wantonly
Mixing the seed of reason, that in my soul
He sowed so pure, with your land's weeds and flowers?
Daja, dear Daja, no; he will not suffer
Your motley growths to root upon my ground.
And I must tell you I myself have felt
How beautiful so'er these blossoms show,
My ground enfeebled and consumed thereby;
Feel in their soul-sweet fragrance heart and brain
Made giddy and bewildered. Your own head
Can bear it, being used. Nor do I blame
Therefor your stronger nerves, that can support it:
Only it suits me not; and even your angel
Comes little short of quite befooling me.
I am ashamed here in my father's house
Of such a folly.

Daja. Folly! As if all reason
Had its home here! Folly! Folly! Folly!
O if I dared but speak!

Recha. And dare you not?
When was I not all ear whene'er you pleased
To tell me of the heroes of your faith?
For their great deeds was I not ever ready
With admiration; from their martyrdoms
Have I withheld the tribute of my tears?
Their faith, indeed, did ne'er appear to me
What's most heroic in them. Yet more welcome

Ever to me the doctrine, that devotion
And piety towards God cannot depend
On our beliefs or fancies about God.
Dear Daja, this my father often said :
And you consented with him to its truth :
Why undermine you what with him you builded ?
Daja, this is no talk wherewith to prelude
The meeting with our friend—For me perhaps
'Tis fitting, for to me so much depends—But hark,
A knocking at the gate ! What if 'twere he !

SCENE II

Recha. Daja and the Templar, to whom someone outside opens the door with the words :

Enter, sir Knight !

Recha. [Starts back, composes herself, and is about to fall at his feet.]

It is ! it is my rescuer !

Templar. This to escape I made my coming tardy

And yet . . .

Recha. Before this proud man's feet I kneel

Only to thank my God and not the man.

The man refuses thanks, wishes for that

As little as the water-pail that at the fire

Did show itself so zealous, filled itself

And poured itself, and filled, nor cared a whit ;

So, even so, the man ; he, too, was thrown

With like indifference upon the flame,

And there, as chanced, I fell into his arm ;

And then, by chance, remained, as might a spark

Upon his mantle, lying on his arms ;

Till something, what I know not, flung us both

Out of the burning. What is here for thanks ?

In Europe wine will urge to other deeds

Braver than these. The Templars, too, must ever

Stand ready for the like, they must, we know,

Just like to hounds a little better trained,

Snatch men both from the water and the fire—

Templar. [Who has looked on surprised and disturbed.] O Daja,

Daja ! if at troubled moments

My fretted spirit dealt with you unkindly,

Why every folly that escaped my lips

Brought you to her? That was too sharp revenge.
Ah, Daja! from this hour in happier light
Set me before her.

Daja. But, sir Knight, I think
These little thorns you threw against her heart
Did you small damage there.

Recha. What? you had trouble?
And were more avaricious of your cares
Than of your life?

Templar. My sweet and gracious child!—
But all my soul's divided between eye
And ear! Sure this was not the maid; no, no,
This was not she I drew from out the fire
For who that knew her had not dared the same?
Who would have waited for me?—True—disguised—the
terror

[Pause, in which, gazing at her, he seems to lose himself.]

Recha. You are not changed—I find you still the same

[Pause, until she continues in order to interrupt his astonished gaze.]

Now tell us, Knight, where you have been so long?
Might I not almost ask—where you are now?

Templar. I am,—where mayhap I've no right to be.

Recha. Where you have been, perhaps where you've no right?
That is not well.

Templar. On—on—what is the mountain?
On Sinai.

Recha. Ah, upon Sinai? Beautiful!
Now can I learn at last from trusty lips
Whether 'tis true . . .

Templar. What? whether it is true
That still the self-same spot is to be seen
Where Moses stood with God, when . . .

Recha. No, not that
Where'er he stood, 'twas before God; whereof
All that I need I know; but whether true
That this same height is far less hard to climb
Than to descend? For, with all hills I've scaled,
As yet, 'twas ever just the opposite.

How, Knight, why turn away? Would you not see me?

Templar. I turn from seeing you to hear you better.

Recha. More that I may not mark you when you laugh
At my simplicity, and how you smile,
When I no weightier questions ask of you

About this holiest of all holy hills.

Is it not so?

Templar. Then I must look again
Into your eyes. What? do you shut them fast?
Now stifle you your laughter? What need I
To read in looks, in questionable looks,
What ears can tell me plainly—audibly
You speak—But silent now? Ah, Recha! Recha!
Sure he spoke truly “Know her only first!”

Recha. Who has—by whom—that told you?

Templar. “Only know
Her first”; it was your father’s word to me,
Spoken of you.

Daja. And not I, too, by chance?
And not I, too?

Templar. But he, where is he, then?
Where is your father, then? Is he perhaps
Still with the Sultan?

Recha. Doubtless.

Templar. Still, still there?

O me forgetful! No, it cannot be
That he’s there still. Down by the cloister wall
He would await my coming; so ’twas fixed,
So settled when we parted. Pardon me,
I hasten to bring him . . .

Daja. That is my affair;
Rather, remain. I bring him instantly.

Templar. Not so, not so. He looks to meet me there,
Not you. Besides he might—no man can tell—
So easily with Saladin have fallen
On disaccord—you do not know the Sultan—
Sure he’s in danger if I go not.

Recha. How?

Templar. Danger, danger, for me, for you, for him,
If in all speed I go not.

SCENE III

Recha and Daja

Recha. What means it, Daja?
All in a moment! Why? What’s come to him?
What drives him?

Daja. Patience, let him be. I think
'Tis no bad sign, perhaps.

Recha. But sign of what?

Daja. Something takes place within him. Something boils
Which yet must not boil over. Leave him only.
'Tis your turn now

Recha My turn; *Daja*? You grow,
Like him, past comprehending.

Daja. Soon you can
Requite him the disquiet he has caused you.
Be only not too hard, or too revengeful.

Recha Of what you speak, perhaps yourself may know.

Daja. Are you already quite at rest again?

Recha. That am I; yes, that am I . . .

Daja. Or at least
Confess your unrest gives more joy than pain,
And that you thank his unrest for the rest
That you enjoy.

Recha. Then all unconsciously!
For what at most I might confess to you,
Were this that it surprises even myself
How such a calm within so suddenly
Can follow in the wake of such a tempest.
This nearer sight of him, his talk, his tone
Have—have . . .

Daja. Left you quite satiate?

Recha. No, not quite:
Nay, that I will not say, nay, far from that.

Daja. Only the first fierce hunger stilled.

Recha. Well, yes.
If so you'll have it.

Daja. I? O, not at all.

Recha. To me he must be dear and ever dearer
As the days pass, even if my pulse change not
When I but hear his name; no more my heart
Beat faster, stronger when I think on him—
What am I babbling? Come, dear *Daja*, come
Just once more to the window that looks out
Upon the palms.

Daja. Ah! the fierce hunger, then,
Is not quite stilled.

Recha. At least I'll see the palms
Yet once again, not only him amongst them.

Daja This chill begins, I doubt, another fever—
Recha. What chill? I feel no chill. And verily
See not less gladly what I see in calm.

SCENE IV

An audience chamber in Saladin's palace. Saladin and Sittah

Saladin. [*In entering, speaks towards door.*]

Soon as the Jew arrives, let him come here.

He does not seem to hasten over-much.

Sittah. Perhaps not found at once, or gone abroad.

Saladin. O sister! sister!

Sittah. Saladin, you act

As if a battle were in prospect.

Saladin. Yes;

And that with weapons I have never practised.

I have to pose and keep a careful guard;

To lay traps, too, to stand upon smooth ice.

When could I so? When studied I such tricks?

Must do them now. Ay me, for what? for what?

To fish for money! Money! to extort by dread

The money of a Jew. To such mean arts

Am I at last reduced, to gain myself

The meanest of mean things.

Sittah. The meanest thing,

Too much despised, will take revenge, brother.

Saladin. Alas! 'Tis true! And if this Jew of ours

Be wholly that good man, so wise, humane,

The dervish painted once?

Sittah. If such he be,

Why, then we need no snares. The snare awaits

Only the fearful, cautious, greedy Jew—

The good and wise is ours without a snare.

A pleasure you've before you, even to hear

How such a man will speak, with what bold strength

Either he'll snap the cord, or it may be

With what shy prudence he'll slip past the net:

This joy's before you.

Saladin. True, and I await it

As a new pleasure—

Sittah. Why, then nothing further

Can disconcert you. See, 'tis merely one

Out of the multitude ; merely a Jew
Like other Jews : would not you be ashamed
To seem to him what he thinks all men are ?
And thinks the better, the humaner, man
The more a fool.

Saladin. I must do wickedly,
You mean, so that the wicked may not think
Wickedly of me ?

Sittah. True, if wickedness
Be treating things according to their kind.

Saladin. Ah ! let a woman frame what scheme she will,
Trust her to fit it with a fair disguise.
If I but touch a ware so delicate,
It breaks in my coarse hand. For things like that
Whoso invented them must carry through,
With artful sleight and cunning craftiness.
Be it as 'twill ! I dance as best I can—
And think I'd rather do it ill than well.

Sittah. Trust not yourself too little. You will win
If you resolve it. Ever men like you
Would fain convince us 'tis the sword alone,
Only the sword that gained them victory—
The lion who went hunting with the fox,
Of his companion doubtless was ashamed,
Not of his cunning . . .

Saladin. O, women are so happy
When they seduce men to their level. Go !
Go, Sittah ! I have learned my lesson quite.

Sittah. What, must I go ?

Saladin. Surely you would not stay ?

Sittah. If not stay with you—in the presence here—
Then in the ante-chamber . . .

Saladin. There to hearken ?

No, sister, no ; if I may once insist.
Away ! the curtain rustles, he is here ;
I'll see to it you have not long to wait.

[*While she leaves by one door, Nathan enters by the other ; and
Saladin sits down.*]

SCENE V

Saladin and Nathan

Saladin. Come nearer, Jew ! Approach ! Come closer yet—
And fear not.

Nathan. Fear be to your enemies.

Saladin. You are called Nathan ?

Nathan. Yes.

Saladin. Nathan the Wise ?

Nathan. No.

Saladin. By yourself, O no, but by the people.

Nathan. May be ; the people !

Saladin. Yet you think not, surely,
I hold in scorn the judgment of the people ?
Long have I wished that I might know the man
Whom they call wise.

Nathan. Ev'n if in mockery
They named him ? Ev'n if to the people " wise "
Should mean no more than prudent ? prudent but he
Who reckons cleverly his own advantage—

Saladin. His true advantage, mean you, his true good ?

Nathan. Then verily were the man of selfish mind
Most prudent. Then indeed were wise and prudent
But one.

Saladin. You seek to prove, what you would contradict.
Men's true advantages the people know not
You know them, or at least have sought to know ;
Have weighed them, pondered them ; and this itself
Already makes the wise man.

Nathan. Which no man
But thinks he is.

Saladin. Enough of modesty,
Too much of that, when one expects dry reason,
Can make one sick. [*Springs up.*]

Let's come to business.
But—but—uprightly, Jew ! In honesty !

Nathan. I will so serve you, Sultan, to be deemed
Worthy your constant custom.

Saladin. Serve me, how ?

Nathan. The best of all I have, be at your service
And at the lowest price.

Saladin. Of what speak you ?

Not, surely, of your wares? Chaffer and higgles
My sister may. (That's for the listener !)
I have no use for merchants and their goods.

Nathan Then without doubt you will desire to know
Whatever on my way I chanced across
Or marked of your foes' arms—if openly—

Saladin. Even of that I nothing ask of you.
Of that I know already all I need ;
In short—

Nathan. Command me, Sultan

Saladin. I desire

Instruction of you in another field,
Quite other ; and to use your wisdom there.
Since you are wise, tell me as to a friend,
What faith, what law, have satisfied you best.

Nathan. Sultan, I am a Jew—

Saladin. A Muslim I.

The Christian stands between us. Of these three
Religions only one can be the true one.
A man like you will not consent to stay
Where'er the accident of birth has cast him ;
Or if he stays, 'twill be of 's own election
As insight, reason, choice of best things, prompt him.
Come, then, impart to me your insight : let me hear
The moving reasons : since for this high quest
Time was not granted me. Tell me the choice,
Tell me the grounds—of course, in confidence—
Which fixed the choice, that I may make it mine.
How now ! You start, you weigh me with your eye.
It well may be that of all Sultans yet
I am the first inspired by such a whim,
Which yet methinks is no unworthy one
Even for a Sultan Not so ? Then speak out !
Speak out. Or would you have a minute's space
To ponder it ? Good ; I will give it you—
(Has she been listening ? I will catch her out :
And hear how I have managed.) Ponder now ;
Ponder it swiftly. Presently I'm here.

[*Goes into the ante-chamber, to which Sittah had betaken herself.*]

SCENE VI

Nathan, alone

Nathan. Hm ! Hm ! Marvellous ! What's to happen now ?
What does the Sultan want ? I came prepared
For money, and he asks for truth—for truth !
And wants it paid in ready cash, as though
The truth were coinage. Yea, even as if
It were old coinage that was told by weight.
That might pass, truly ! But such new-coined pieces
That owe the die their value, must be counted.
As money into sack, does one sweep truth
Into one's head ? Who, then, is here the Jew,
I or the Sultan ? Might he not, perhaps,
Ask for the truth in truth ? 'Twere a mean thing
Even the suspicion that he used truth
As a mere trap to catch me. That were mean ?
Too mean ? What is too mean for great men's use ?
True, true. See how he drives the door and storms
The house ! Surely one knocks and listens first
When one comes as a friend. So, warily
I'll walk ! But how, but what ? Wholly to be
The common Jew, that will not serve me here,
Still less not to be Jew at all. For if
Not Jew, he well might ask me, Then why not
A Mussulman ? That's it ! And that can save me !
Not children only, we can feed men too
With fables. Ah ! he comes. Well, let him come !

SCENE VII

Saladin and Nathan

Saladin. (The field is clear now.) Not too soon, I hope,
Do I return to you ? You are at end
With your deliberation. Come, then, speak !
Not a soul hears us.

Nathan. All the world may listen
And welcome.

Saladin. Confident, so confident
Is Nathan of his cause ? Ha ! such I name
A wise man ! Who dissembles never truth

But stakes all for it—body, life, and soul.

Nathan Yes, truly, when 'tis needful and availeth

Saladin. Henceforward I can hope with right to wear

A title of mine, reformer of the world

And of the law.

Nathan. In sooth, a lovely title !

Yet, Sultan, ere I trust me to your hands,

Perhaps you will permit me to relate

An ancient tale ?

Saladin. Why not ? I was from childhood

Lover of tales, well told.

Nathan. Ah ! ah ! *Well told*.

That's more than I can claim.

Saladin. Come, why again

So proudly modest ? Come, the tale ! the tale !

Nathan. There lived a man in a far Eastern clime

In hoar antiquity, who from the hand

Of his most dear beloved received a ring

Of priceless estimate. An opal 'twas

Which spilt a hundred lovely radiances

And had a magic power, that whoso wore it,

Trusting therein, found grace with God and man

What wonder therefore that this man o' the East

Let it not from his finger, and took pains

To keep it to his household for all time.

Thus he bequeathed the jewel to the son

Of all his sons he loved best, and provided

That he in turn bequeath it to the son

Who was to him the dearest ; evermore

The best-beloved, without respect of birth,

By right o' the ring alone should be the head,

The house's prince. You understand me, Sultan.

Saladin. I understand : continue !

Nathan. Well, this ring,

From son to son descending, came at last

Unto a father of three sons, who all

To him, all three, were dutiful alike,

And whom, all three, in natural consequence,

He loved alike. Only from time to time

Now this ; now that one ; now the third, as each

Might be alone with him, the other twain

Not sharing his o'erflowing heart, appeared

Worthiest the ring ; and then, piously weak,

He promised it to each. And so things went
Long as they could. But dying hour drawn near
Brought the good father to perplexity.
It pained him, the two sons, trusting his word,
Should thus be wounded. What was he to do?
Quickly he sends for an artificer,
To make him on the model of his ring
Two others, bidding spare nor cost nor pains
To make them in all points identical;
And thus the artist did. When they are brought
Even the father scarcely can distinguish
His pattern-ring. So, full of joy, he calls
His sons, and each one to him separately;
And gives to each son separately his blessing,
Gives each his ring, and dies. Still hear you, Sultan?
Saladin. [*Who has turned away perplexed.*] I hear, I hear—Only
bring you the tale
To speedy end. Is 't done?

Nathan. The tale is finished.
For what still follows, any man may guess.
Scarce was the father dead, but each one comes
And shows his ring, and each one claims to be
True prince o' the house. Vainly they search, strive, argue,
The true ring was not proved or provable—
[*After a pause, during which he waits the Sultan's reply.*]
Almost as hard to prove as to us now
What the true creed is.

Saladin. How? is this to be
The answer to my question?

Nathan. Nay, it merely
Makes my excuse that I don't trust myself
Exactly to distinguish twixt the rings
The Sire with express purpose had bade make
So that no probing might distinguish them—

Saladin. The rings! You play with me! It was my thought
That the religions I have named to you
Were plainly, easily distinguishable,
Down even to clothing, down to meat and drink!

Nathan. Only not so in questions of foundation—
For base not all their creeds on history,
Written or handed down? And history
Must be received in faith implicitly.

Is't not so? Then on whom rest we this faith

Implicit, doubting not? Surely on our own?
Them from whose blood we spring? Surely on them
Who from our childhood gave us proofs of love?
Who never have deceived us, saving when
'Twere happier, safer so to be deceived?
How, then, shall I my fathers less believe
Than you your own? or in the other case,
Can I demand that you should give the lie
To your forefathers, that mine be not gainsaid?
And, yet again, the same holds of the Christians.
Is't not so?

Saladin. (By high God! The man is right;
I must be dumb.)

Nathan. Then let us come again
Back to our rings. As we have said—the sons
Appealed to law; and swore before the Judge
Out of the father's hand, immediately,
To have received the ring—and this was true—
After for long he had the promise sure
One day to enjoy the privilege of the ring—
And this no less was true. Each cried the father
Could not be false towards him, and ere he might
Let such suspicion stain him, must believe,
Glad as he were to think the best of them,
His brothers played him false, and he should soon
Expose the traitors, justify himself.

Saladin. And now, the Judge? I'm waiting, fain to hear
What you will make him say. What was his verdict?

Nathan. Thus spake the Judge: Bring me the father here
To witness, I will hear him; and if not
Leave then my judgment seat. Think you this chair
Is set for reading of riddles? Do you wait,
Expecting the true ring to open mouth?
Yet halt! I hear, the genuine ring possesses
The magic power to bring its wearer love
And grace with God and man. That must decide;
For never can the false rings have this virtue.
Well, then; say whom do two of you love best?
Come, speak! What! silent? Is the rings' effect
But backward and not outward? Is it so
That each one loves himself most? Then I judge
All three of you are traitors and betrayed!

Your rings all three are false. The genuine ring
Perchance the father lost, and to replace it
And hide the loss, had three rings made for one.

Saladin. O, splendid ! splendid !

Nathan. So, went on the Judge,

You may not seek my counsel, but my verdict ;
But go ! My counsel is, you take the thing
Exactly as it lies If each of you
Received his ring from his good father's hand,
Then each of you believe his ring the true one—
'Tis possible the father would not suffer
Longer the one ring tyrannise in 's house,
Certain, he loved all three, and equal loved,
And would not injure two to favour one.
Well, then, let each one strive most zealously
To show a love untainted by self-care,
Each with his might vie with the rest to bring
Into the day the virtue of the jewel
His finger wears, and help this virtue forth
By gentleness, by spirit tractable,
By kind deeds and true piety towards God ;
And when in days to come the magic powers
Of these fair rings among your children's children
Brighten the world, I call you once again,
After a thousand thousand years are lapsed,
Before this seat of judgment. On that day
A wiser man shall sit on it and speak.
Depart ! So spake the modest Judge.

Saladin. God ! God !

Nathan. Saladin, if you feel yourself to be

This wiser promised man . . .

Saladin [*Who rushes towards him, seizes his hand, which to the
end he does not release.*] I, dust ? I, nothing ?

O God !

Nathan. What would you, Saladin ?

Saladin. My good Nathan !

The thousand thousand years of the great Judge
Are not yet up.' Not mine His judgment throne.

Go ! but abide my friend.

Nathan. Had Saladin

Further no word for me ?

Saladin. Not anything.

Nathan. Nothing?

Saladin. No, not a jot—Why ask you this?

Nathan. I should have begged an opportunity

To proffer a petition,

Saladin. Need you then

An opportunity? My friend, speak on!

Nathan. I come from a wide round, whereon my task

Was gathering in of debts. Almost I have

Too much of ready coin. The time begins

To assume the look of storm. I hardly know

Where safely to bestow it, and have thought,

Seeing how much this coming war will ask,

That you, perchance, might use a portion.

Saladin. [*Looking him in the eyes steadily*] *Nathan!*

I will not ask whether before this hour

Al-Hafi has been with you, nor enquire

Whether a suspicion prompts you to this offer

Of your freewill . . .

Nathan. What mean you, a suspicion?

Saladin. Yes, I deserve it. Pardon. For what helps it?

I must confess, I had it in my mind—

Nathan. Not surely to request the same of me?

Saladin. Yea, verily.

Nathan. Thus both of us were helped!

But that I cannot send you all my means

The Templar gives occasion. sure you know him.

A heavy obligation must I meet

To him before all else.

Saladin. A Templar, what?

Surely you will not aid with your good gold

My worst of enemies?

Nathan. I speak of one,

One only, him whose life you spared.

Saladin. Ah what

You mind me of—Most strange! I had forgot

The stripling. Know you him? Where is he lodged?

Nathan. Where lodged? Why, know you not how much of blessing

Fell to my lot, even through your grace done to him?

'Twas he, at risk of his new-gifted life,

That saved my daughter from the flaming walls.

Saladin. He? did he that? Truly, he looked like that—

This surely had my brother likewise done,

Whom he so much resembles. Is he still
In the Holy City? Bring him here to me.
I've told so many things to my dear sister
Of this her brother, whom she never knew,
That I must needs show her his counterfeit!
Go, fetch him! See, of one good action, tho'
It was of simple passion born, so many
Other good deeds flow forth! Go fetch him hither.

Nathan. [*Letting go of Saladin's hand.*] Straightway! And of
the rest, the other matter,

Does it, too, stand?

[*Exit.*

Saladin. Ah, had my sister stayed
To hearken! Quick, to her! to her! For how
Can all be told that now I have to tell?

[*Exit from the other side.*

SCENE VIII

*Under the Palms, in neighbourhood of the cloister, where the
Templar waits for Nathan.*

Templar. [*Walks up and down, struggling with himself, till he
breaks out.*] Here halts the victim, weary and foredone—

'Tis well! I would not know or see more clear
What in me passes, and would not foresee
What yet will pass. Enough! I've fled in vain,
In vain! And yet I could nought else but fly.
Well, come what will; the stroke fell far too swiftly
To be escaped; though hard and long I struggled
To come from under. To see her, whom yet
To see I had but small desire, to see her
And the resolve never to lose her from
Mine eyes, and yet what speak I of resolve?
Resolve is plan, is act, while I but suffer,
Suffer, not act—to see her and to feel
Bound to her by strong cords, bound up with her,
Was one; is one: from her to live apart
Is thought unthinkable and were my death,
And wheresoever after death we are,
'Twould be even there my death—Is this, then, love?
So the Knight Templar loves assuredly,
The Christian loves the Jewish maid, in truth;

Hm ! what of that ? In this the Holy Land,
And hereby holy to me evermore,
I have sloughed off a world of prejudices,—
What will my Order say ? As Templar Knight
I'm dead, was dead to them from that self hour
Which made me prisoner to Saladin,—
The head which Saladin restored to me,
Was it my old ?—'tis new ! and clear of all
The lies and stuff they babbled to it once,
Wherewith 'twas slaved ; and 'tis a better one,
Agreeing more with my paternal clime,
I feel it so in truth. For it begins
To think even as my father must have thought
Under those skies, unless those tales be false
They tell of him—Tales ? tales, yet credible
Which never seemed to me more credible
Than here they seem where I but run the risk
Of stumbling, where he fell. Ah, where he fell ?
I'll rather fall with men, than stand with children.
Sure, his example makes me confident
Of his approval. Whose approval else crave I ?
For Nathan's ? Furtherance more than approval
Will not be wanting there. The noble Jew !
Who yet desires not to seem more than Jew !
Here comes he hastening, gladness in his eyes.
Whoe'er came otherwise from Saladin ?
Ho ! Nathan !

SCENE IX

Nathan and the Templar

Nathan. How ? Is 't you ?
Templar. It has been long,
Your converse with the Sultan.
Nathan. Not so long ;
For on my way to him I was much hindered.
Ah, truly, Curd, the man matches his fame.
His fame is his mere shadow. But now first
I have a thing to say that will not wait.
Templar. What ?
Nathan. He would speak with you and bids you come
Without delay. Give me your company
Now to my house, where first I must procure

A something for his hand, and then we go.
Templar. Over your threshold, Nathan, willingly
I pass no more.

Nathan. Meanwhile you have been there
Already and spoken with her. Come then, tell me
How Recha pleases you?

Templar. Beyond all speech!
Only—to see her more—never will I!
Never, except I have your promise here
That I may see her ever.

Nathan. How will you
I should interpret that?

Templar. [*After a short pause falling on his neck.*] My father!
father!

Nathan. Young man!

Templar. Not son? I pray you, Nathan!

Nathan. Beloved youth!

Templar. Not son? I pray you, Nathan!
Beseech you by the tenderest ties of nature!
O let not later bonds come in between!
Let it suffice to be a man! nor drive
Me from you!

Nathan. Dear, dear friend! . . .

Templar. And son?

Not son? Even not then, if gratitude
Has paved love's way to your loved daughter's heart?
Not even then, if both hearts only waited
A father's gracious sign to melt in one?—
You're silent.

Nathan. You surprise, you startle me,
Young knight.

Templar. Surprise you, Nathan, startle you
With your own inmost thoughts? You'll not disown them
Because my lips have spoke them? I surprise you?

Nathan. There's something I must know—who was this Stauffen
You claim as sire?

Templar. What say you, Nathan? what?
Is curiosity, then, all you feel
At such a moment?

Nathan. Nay, not so, for, look you,
I myself knew, knew well in earlier years
A Stauffen, his name Conrad.

Templar. Well, what think you?

That same name bore my father.

Nathan. Verily?

Templar. Myself am so called after him; for Curd
Is Conrad.

Nathan. Even so, my Conrad could not be
Your father. For my Conrad was like you,
A Templar, and unwedded.

Templar. O, for that !

Nathan. How?

Templar. O, for that he still might be my father.

Nathan. Now you jest.

Templar. And you, you take it
Quite too precisely. Say, what were it then?
Something of bastard or side-blow perhaps !
Granted, the wound is not to be despised—
Absolve me of my proof of ancestry,
And in my turn I will absolve you yours.
Not truly that I touch with taint of doubt
Your family tree. That, God forbid ! you could
Uprear it leaf by leaf to Abraham.
And beyond that I'll build it up myself,
Attesting it by oath.

Nathan. Now you grow bitter.
Have I deserved it? Think you I detracted
Aught from your worth?—But yet, I will not take
For a word dropped, offence. No more's to speak.

Templar. Really? No more to speak. O, then, forgive me !

Nathan. Come with me only, come !

Templar. But tell me whither?
Not to your house? That never; that I cannot !—
There's fire there. I will await you here. Go you !
If I see her again; then many times
I still shall see her. But if not, why then
I've seen her far too often . . .

Nathan. I shall hasten.

SCENE X

The Templar, and soon after Daja

Templar. Enough and more. The brain of human-kind
In grasp is almost limitless, yet often
Suddenly fills to bursting with a trifle !

It matters nothing, nothing ; let it be
Even full of what it will—Let patience work ;
The spirit soon compounds the turgid stuff,
Makes itself room ; order and light return.
Do I then love for the first time ? Or what
I once called love, was it not love at all ?
Or is love only what I suffer now ?

Daja [*Who has slipped in from the side*] Sir Knight ! sir
Knight !

Templar. Who calls ? Ha, *Daja*, you ?

Daja I have slipped past him : but where you now stand,
He still might see us Come, behind this tree.

Templar. What is it ? Why so secret ? Tell me why.

Daja What brings me to you, does concern a secret,
A secret truly ; more, a double one—
The one only know I, the other you
Alone can know. How if we made exchange ?
Trust me with yours, then I'll trust you with mine.

Templar. With pleasure, readily ; if I may know
First what you think is mine. But out of yours
That surely will appear. Only begin.

Daja. O, that would never do ; no, no, sir Knight ;
You first ; I'll follow ; be assured that mine,
My secret cannot help you by a jot,
Have I not yours before it. Only quick !
If I but win it by my questioning,
Then you've confided nothing. Then my secret
Remains my secret, and your own escapes.
Still, you poor soldier ! That you men should think,
O credulous men ! that you can keep such secrets
From us poor women.

Templar. Secrets we ourselves
Often don't know we have.

Daja. That well may be
Then, to be sure, I'll so far act the friend
To acquaint you with yourself. Say, what then made you
So all at once vanish in cloud, and leave
Your friends deserted ? that you do not now
Return with Nathan ? Recha, has she so little
Worked on you ? How ? or, should I ask, so much ?
So much ! so much ! Instruct me how to know
The fluttering of the poor ensnared bird
Limed to the tree ! In brief, confess me here

That you do love her, love her even to madness,
And I will tell——

Templar. To madness? Verily;
Your insight is astounding.

Daja. Grant me then
Only the love; I'll let you off the madness.

Templar. Since, I suppose, that may be taken for granted?
A Templar-Knight to love a Jewish girl! . . .

Daja. Truly there seems but little sense in that—
And yet at whiles there's more of sense in things
Than we surmise; nor were 't incredible
The Christ should lead us to Himself by ways
The wise man of himself might never find.

Templar. Your words are solemn (Well, if Providence
Were put in place of Christ, were she not right?)
You breed in me a curiosity
I never knew before.

Daja. O, 'tis the land
Of miracles!

Templar. (Well,—the miraculous.
How can it otherwise? Seeing all the nations
Crowd themselves here together.) My dear Daja,
Consider it confessed—what you desire:
That I do love her, hardly understand
How I shall live without her; that . . .

Daja. Truly, sir Knight? Here pledge your oath to me
To take her for your own, to save my Recha,
Here, while life lasts; yonder, eternally.

Templar. And how? How can I? Can I swear to do
What stands not in my power?

Daja. But in your power
It stands. For by a single word I bring it
Within your power.

Templar. So that not even her father
Could hinder or obstruct?

Daja. Eh, Father—what Father!
Her father *must* agree.

Templar. Must, Daja? Must?
Sure, he's not fallen amongst robbers yet!
There is no *must* for him.

Daja. I tell you truth;
He must in the end consent, and gladly too.

Templar. Must, must, and gladly. Daja, how if I say

That I myself already tried to touch
This chord within him?

Daja. And he would not accord?

Templar. No! No; with such a discord he joined in
As sharply wounded me.

Daja. What say you? What!
That you had shown him, even in shadow merely,
Your love for her, and he did not leap up
For joy? but frostily withdrew, and muttered
Of difficulties?

Templar. So it was.

Daja. Then I
Will not reflect a single moment more—

[*Pause.*

Templar. And yet—you are reflecting?

Daja. All things else
Prove Nathan kind—myself, how much I owe him!

And now he will not listen! O, God knows
My very heart bleeds in me, so to force him.

Templar. I pray you, *Daja*, free me once for all
From these uncertainties. But if you are
Yourself unsure, whether what you intend
Should good or bad, shameful or worthy praise,
Be called—then, silence! I'll forget
That you have ought to keep unspoken

Daja. Rather
That stings me not to speak. Then know—our *Recha*
Is not a Jewess; is,—she is a Christian

Templar. So? Wish you joy! Was the delivery hard?
Shrink you not from the travail! O go on,
Go on with zeal to populate the skies,
If you can't earth!

Daja. How, Knight? Deserves my news this mockery?
That *Recha* is a Christian gives no joy
To you, a Christian and a Templar Knight
Who loves her?

Templar. Most especially, as she's
A Christian of your making.

Daja. So you think?
Well, let it be! But no, for I would see
Him who will make her convert! 'Tis her fortune
To have been long, what now she can't become.

Templar. Explain, or—go!

Daja. She is a Christian child,

And born of Christian parents; is baptized . . .

Templar. [*Abruptly.*] And Nathan?

Daja. Not her father!

Templar. Nathan not

Her father? Know you what you speak?

Daja. The truth,

Which many a time has cost me tears of blood.

No, he is not her father . . .

Templar. And had her

Only brought up as a daughter? had the child,

The Christian child, brought up as Jewish maid?

Daja. 'Tis certain.

Templar. And she knew not of her birth?

Had never learnt of him that she a Christian

Was born and not a Jewess?

Daja. Never, never!

Templar. And he not merely had brought up the child

In this delusion, but has left the maiden

In this deception still?

Daja. Alas!

Templar. But—Nathan,

The wise, good Nathan has allowed himself

To falsify the voice of nature thus,

Thus misdirect the outpouring of a heart

Which, left to itself, would take quite other ways?

Daja, you have indeed confided here

A weighty matter—which involves great issues—

Which quite confounds me—which puts me in doubt

What I must do. So give me time. Then, go!

He passes here anon. He might surprise us.

Therefore, go, *Daja*!

Daja. It would be my death!

Templar. Speak with him now I cannot. If you meet him,

Say only that we two shall presently

Meet in the Sultan's chamber.

Daja. But betray not

To him what you have heard.—This does but give

The last seal to the matter, takes away

All scruples from you when you think of Recha—

And if thereon you carry her to Europe,

Let me not stay behind. I conjure you—

Templar. I lay that on my heart; but, leave me now.

ACT IV—SCENE I

SCENE : *In the cloisters of the convent**The Friar and soon thereafter the Templar**Friar.* Well, well ; of course the Patriarch is right !

Although as yet no single enterprise

He laid upon my shoulders has success.

Why does he choose only such jobs for me ?

I have no craving for these artful games,

I am not made for the persuader's part,

Nor wish to stick my nose in everything

Or play the meddler. Am I, then, for this,

Desiring to be separate, for myself

Alone, only the more by others' will

To be the more entangled ?

Templar. [*Entering hastily.*] My good friar !

We meet again. A long time I have sought you.

Friar. Sought me, my lord ?*Templar.*

Have you forgotten me ?

Friar. No, no ! I only thought that never in my life

Should I so come to meet my lord again :

Prayed the good God I might not. For God knows

How loathsome was the errand laid on me,

He knows whether I wished an open ear

To find for it ; and knows how I rejoiced

That you so spurned, without a moment's thought,

What misbecame your knighthood. I was glad ;

But things go all awry ; we meet once more !

Templar. You know, then, why I come, though I myself

Can hardly guess.

Friar.

Perhaps, have thought it over,

Perhaps discovered that the Patriarch

Was after all i' the right ; that pelf and honour

His project might ensure you, that a foe

Remains a foe, even if he seven times

Had proved our angel. So with flesh and blood

You have ta'en counsel, and now come again

To offer service. God !

Templar.

No, my good man !

Be calm ; for this I come not ; not for this

Would I consult the Patriarch. What I thought

On that point think I still, and would not lose
For anything the world holds that regard
Of which a man so honest, pious, kind
Has deemed me worthy. No, I have but come
To beg the Patriarch's counsel . . .

Friar. You—of him

A Knight, consult a—priest. [*Looking timidly round.*]

Templar. Indeed, the affair

Is rather priestly.

Friar. Yet you will not find
The priest consult a knight, however knightly
The business be.

Templar. 'Tis a priest's privilege
To go astray, a privilege none of us
Envies him much. In truth were it myself,
Solely myself in question, and myself
Solely to answer where were need of Patriarchs?
But there be things I would do faultily
By others' counsel rather than do well
By my sole will. Besides, I now perceive
Religion too is party, and who thinks
Himself therein no partisan, that man
Is in himself a party This being so,
'Tis right it should be.

Friar. That I speak not of,
Not knowing if I understand my lord.

Templar. And yet ! (let's see what is 't I really want.
Decree or counsel? Simple counsel or refined?)
I thank you, friar; thanks for your wise word.
Why Patriarch? Be you my Patriarch?
I'll rather ask the Christian in the Patriarch
Than Patriarch in Christian. Now the question—
The matter is . . .

Friar. No further, sir, no further !
To what good end? Surely my lord mistakes me.
Who knows too much, has the more care; for me
One care's enough and more. O good ! see yonder,
There comes, for my relief, the priest himself
Stay where you stand. He has already seen you.

SCENE II

*The Patriarch, who comes up with priestly pomp by the one cloister ;
and the foregoing*

Templar. I would avoid him. He's not at all my man !
A portly, rosy, and most friendly prelate !
And what a splendour !

Friar. You should only see him
Going to court ; comes from a sick man now.

Templar. How Saladin must be abashed before him !

Patriarch [*Approaching, makes a sign to the friar.*] Here !
Surely that is the Templar. What would he ?

Friar. I know not.

Patriarch. [*Approaching him, whilst the friar and retire retire.*]

Well, sir Knight ! Am much rejoiced

To see the brave young man ! Eh, you are still
A stripling. Now, by help of God, therefrom
Something might grow.

Templar. Scarce more, my reverend lord,
Than what already is, and mayhap less.

Patriarch. I hope at least that such a pious knight,
For the good and glory of dear Christendom
And God's own cause, may flourish many years !
That surely will not fail, if, as is due,
Young valour hearken to the ripened wisdom
Of age ? How else can I now serve my friend ?

Templar. With what to youth is wanting, that's with counsel.

Patriarch. O willingly ! if counsel but be taken.

Templar. And yet, not blindly ?

Patriarch. Who could ask it ? No,

For verily none should cease to use his reason,
God-given reason, in its proper sphere.
Mark you, its proper sphere, not everywhere !
O no ! As, for example, when God deigns,
By one of His good angels—that's to say,
Some servant of His word—suggest to us
A means, in some uncommon way of action,
The weal of Christendom and His great Church
To further and establish, who shall dare
Question, by reason, the decree of Him
Who hath created reason, and to test
The eternal law o' the Glory of the Heavens

By the small rules of what vain men call honour?
Of this enough, enough. What is it, then,
Whereon my lord now seeks our counsel?

Templar.

This :

Suppose, most reverend Father, that a Jew
An only child possessed, a little maid,
Whom he had reared up with the utmost care
And in all kindness, loved as his own soul,
And who most piously returned his love,
And now 'twere whispered unto one of us
This maiden was no daughter of the Jew;
That he had chosen her in her infancy,—
Bought, stolen—what you will, and that we learned
The maiden was a Christian, and baptized;
The Jew had only reared her as a Jewess,
Let her remain a Jewess and his daughter;—
Say, reverend Father, what were here to do?

Patriarch. I shudder. Yet before all else my lord explain
Whether the case he pictures is a fact
Or a hypothesis. That is to say,
Whether my lord has but imagined this
Or whether it has happened, and goes on.

Templar. I thought that were all one; I had but wished
To know your Reverence' mind.

Patriarch.

One! look you, sir,

How wide the arrogant human intellect
In spiritual things can err—Sir, no, no!
For if the case proposed be but a sport
O' the brain, it is not worth the taking pains
To think it out in earnest. I leave the case
To theatres, where oft such arguments
Of *pro et con* are with the crowd's applause
Handled at large. But if my lord have now
No such stage-trifles in his mind, and if
The case is fact, and in our diocese,
Even in our city of Jerusalem,
This thing has happened—then indeed—

Templar.

What then?

Patriarch. Then were the Jew without a day's delay
To undergo the penalty which laws
Both Papal and Imperial denounce
For such an outrage, such a heinous crime.

Templar.

And that?

Patriarch. These laws I speak of for the Jew
Who leads a Christian to apostasy
Appoint the stake, the fire . . .

Templar. What, the dread flame?

Patriarch. And how much more to that most wicked Jew
Who tears by violence a poor Christian child
Out of the bond of baptism. Is not all
We do to children violence? That's to say,
Of course, excepting what the Church may do
With children

Templar. But say only if the child
Save for the Jew's compassion, were but fallen
A prey to hunger and to wretchedness?

Patriarch. It matters not! The Jew must burn. For better
It were fallen here to utter misery
Than be saved thus to its eternal loss.
Besides, how dares the Jew to forestall God?
Sure, without him God can save whom He will.

Templar. And also, I should think, in spite of him.

Patriarch. No matter! He must burn.

Templar. That touches me
To the very heart! The rather that they say
He has not brought the girl up in his faith
So much as in no faith, and taught her of God
No more, no less, than satisfies the reason.

Patriarch. No matter! He must burn, and were indeed
On this one count worthy to burn three times.
What! Let a child grow up without a faith?
What! the great duty of Belief to leave
Untaught to children? That is wickedness!
I wonder much, sir Knight, that you yourself . . .

Templar. Most reverend lord, for what remains, I leave it,
If God will, to the confessional . . . (*is going*).

Patriarch. What! not now

Render account to me? The criminal,
The Jew you'll leave unnamed? Not now and here
Produce him? Well, I think I know the way!
I'll straightway seek the Sultan. Saladin,
In virtue of the sworn Capitulation,
Which bears his seal, he must, he must protect us;
Protect us in all rights and in all rules
To our most holy faith and Church belonging.
Praise be to God! we have th' Original,

We have his hand and seal. Yes, it is ours !
Easily, too, I'll make him understand
How perilous 'tis even for the State
To believe nothing ! Since all civil bonds
Are loosed, are torn asunder, when men dare
Have no belief . . . Away with such an outrage !

Templar. Pity, I cannot now with better leisure
Enjoy the wise discourse. I'm called to Saladin.

Patriarch. Indeed ? . . . Well, now . . . Now verily. . . .
Then, then. . . .

Templar. I will prepare the Sultan for your coming
If that be pleasing to your Reverence.

Patriarch. Oh !—ah !—I know my lord enjoys high favour
With Saladin ! I beg but to be named
With my devotion to him. I am driven
Evermore purely by the zeal of God.
Where I exceed, it is for Him. But will
My lord yet weigh the matter ? True, is't not,
Sir Knight, that question of the Jew we spoke of
Was nothing but a problem ? That's to say—

Templar. A problem.

[*Exit.*]

Patriarch. Which I notwithstanding mean
To fathom deeper, even to the ground ;
Yet that, again, were really a commission
For Brother Bonafides. Here, my son !

[*He speaks in going off to the friar.*]

SCENE III

*A room in Saladin's Palace, into which a number of sacks are
brought by slaves, and placed side by side on the floor*

Saladin, and soon thereafter Sittah

Saladin. [*Coming in.*] Well, truly now, there seems no end of
that.

Is there still much to come ?

A Slave. Still quite the half.

Saladin. Bear what remains to Sittah. Where's Al-Hafi ?

Let him take charge of these forthwith. Or shall I
Send them to the old man's stronghold in the hills ?
Here 'twill slip through my fingers. Though indeed
One does grow hard at last, and in the end
'Twill cost some art to extort one coin from me

Until at least the moneys out of Egypt
Come to these lands, the destitute must find
Elsewhere their bread. Alms at the Sepulchre,
These must go on, or all the Christian pilgrims
Withdraw with empty hands If only I . . .

Sittah. What's this? What does this money here with me?

Saladin. Therewith repay yourself; the overplus
Lay by for after needs.

Sittah. And is not yet

Old Nathan with the Templar come to you?

Saladin. He seeks him everywhere.

Sittah. See what I've found

In looking through my trinkets.

[*Showing him a small picture.*

Saladin. Ha! my brother!

That's he, 'tis he! *Was* he, *was* he, alas!

Ah brave young hero, whom I lost so soon!

My brother dear, wert thou beside me still,

What had I not accomplished! Give me, *Sittah*,

The picture; look, I know it instantly;

He gave it to thy elder sister, *Lilla*,

One morning when she would not let him go,

Holding him close embraced. 'Twas the last day,

The last that he rode out. I let him ride,

Alone, alas! And *Lilla* died of grief,

And never would forgive me, that alone

I let him ride away. He came no more.

Sittah. Poor brother!

Saladin. But let be! God's will be done!

Once we shall all ride out and come no more.

Besides—who knows? It is not death alone

Frustrates our plans. He had his enemies,

And many a time the strongest man succumbs

Like the most weak. Be 't as it may with him;

I must compare the picture with this Templar,

And see perhaps how much my phantasy

Deceived me.

Sittah. 'Twas for that I brought it. Yet

Give it to me! 'Tis for a woman's eye

To judge such niceties.

Saladin. [*To an usher who enters.*] Speak, who is there?

The Templar? Let him enter!

Sittah. I'll sit here,

Out of your way, nor let my questioning looks
Disturb him.

[*Sits aside on a sofa and lets her veil fall.*]

Saladin. Well, 'tis well ! (Now, for his voice !
How will that prove? The tone of Assad's voice
Sleeps in my memory still, and can awake !)

SCENE IV

The Templar and Saladin

Templar. Dare I, thy prisoner, Sultan . . .

Saladin. Prisoner ?
To whom I make the gift of life, shall I
Not also give him freedom ?

Templar. What fits thee
To do, befits me best to hear, and not
Presume beforehand But yet, Sultan, thanks,
Especial thanks to thee, for granted life
Accords not with my nature or condition.
'Tis at thy service always.

Saladin. Only use it
Never against me. One more pair of hands
Truly I need not grudge my enemy.
But one heart more like thine I cannot spare.
For in no point am I deceived in thee,
Young hero ! Body and soul thou art my Assad.
See ! I might ask thee, where this world of time
Thou hast been hiding ? In what cave hast slept ?
In what a Guinistan by what kind nurturer
This flower has all this age been kept so fresh ?
See ! I might call to your remembrance all
We did long since in company, the woods we roamed,
The gallops o'er the free uncumber'd ground,
I might upbraid thee for that thou hast kept
A secret from me, stolen an adventure from me :
Yes, so I might, if only thee I saw
And not myself as well. Now, let it be !
Of this sweet dream remains so much of truth
That in my autumn there blooms up again
An Assad here. Knight, shall we have it so ?

Templar. Ay ! Whatsoever comes to me from thee,
Be't what it will, is welcome to my soul.

Saladin. Let us try that forthwith; wilt thou abide
With me, about me? As Mussulman, as Christian,
All one! in the white cloak, or gaberdine,
In turban or in helmet, as thou pleasest,
All one to me! I never have desired
That one bark grow on all trees of the wood.

Templar. Else hardly should'st thou be what now thou art,
The conqueror who would rather by God's grace
Till his own field.

Saladin. Well, if thou think'st no worse
Of me, then surely we are half agreed.

Templar. Nay, quite!

Saladin. [*Offering him his hand*] A word?

Templar. A man! receive herewith
More than thou could'st take from me. Wholly thine!

Saladin. Too much gain for one day. Too much, sir Knight.
Came he not with thee?

Templar. Who?

Saladin. Thy Nathan.

Templar. No;
I came alone.

Saladin. Ah, what a deed was that of thine!
And what a happy fortune that the deed
Fell out to his advantage, that great man,

Templar. [*Coolly*] O, yes!

Saladin. So cold? Not so, young man! When God
Does a good deed through us, we must not be
So cold, nor even for modesty appear
To be.

Templar. Yet everything in this strange world
Has many sides! Of which 'tis often hard to tell
How they are reconciled!

Saladin. Hold to the best,
Only the best, and praise the Lord who knows
Best how to reconcile them. But, young man,
If you are so fastidious, then must I
Be on my guard with you. Unhappily
I am myself a thing of many sides
Hard for me often to bring to harmony.

Templar. That grieves me; for suspicion's not my failing,
Nor ever was . . .

Saladin. Well, tell me, then, of whom
Thou hast it now? It almost seemed, of Nathan.

Mistrust of Nathan? Thou? Explain thyself!
Speak, give me earnest of thy confidence.

Templar. I've nothing against Nathan; 'tis myself
Alone I'm vexed with.

Saladin. And for what?

Templar. That I
Have dreamt a Jew might once perchance unlearn
To be a Jew, and dreamt it, too, awake.

Saladin. Away with waking dreams—a vain vexation.

Templar. Thou know'st of Nathan's daughter, Sultan. What
I did for her. I did . . . because I did.

Too proud to reap thanks where I had not sowed,
Day after day, disdainful, I refused
To see the girl again. Her sire was absent;
He came; he heard; he sought me out; he thanked me;
Expressed his hope I might approve his daughter;
Of prospects spoke, of future happy days.
Well, so I was talked over, came, saw, found
A maiden such . . . ah, Sultan, I'm ashamed!

Saladin. Ashamed? Ashamed! Why, that a Jewish girl
Should touch your heart; but that's all past, perhaps?

Templar. That 'gainst this passion my impetuous heart
Stirred by the father's kind inviting words,
Should stand so feebly. Miserable drop,
I fell a second time into the fire.

For now I wooed, and now was I disdained.

Saladin. Disdained?

Templar. Well, the wise father did not straightway
Bid me begone. But the wise father first
Must make enquiry, must consider first. Of course!
Did I not do the like? Enquired, considered
I too not first, when she shrieked in the fire?
Why, certainly! God! 'tis a pretty thing
To be so wise and thoughtful!

Saladin. Now, now, come!
Have patience with an old man; thou'rt but young.
How long are these refusals, then, to last?
Will he perhaps demand of thee that thou
Shalt first become a Jew?

Templar. A Jew? Who knows?

Saladin. Who knows? Why, he who knows what Nathan is.

Templar. The superstition in which we grew up,
Doth not, because we see it as it is,

Lose, therefore, all its power upon our souls.

They are not all free men who mock their chains.

Saladin. Most wisely spoken ! But Nathan verily . . .

Templar. The worst of superstitions is to hold

One's own the most endurable

Saladin. May be,

Still Nathan . . .

Templar. . . . which alone poor purblind men

Must trust, till they can stand the daylight, which

Alone . . .

Saladin. Yes, good ! But, Nathan ! Nathan's lot

Is no such weakness.

Templar. So I also thought !

If all the same this paragon of men

Were such a common Jew that he would seek

To seize on Christian babes to bring them up

As Jews—how then ?

Saladin. And who thus slanders him ?

Templar. The very girl

With whom he would decoy me, hope of whom

He would hold out as payment for the deed

I am not to have done for her in vain ;

This very girl is not his daughter—no

She is a Christian child, some castaway.

Saladin. Whom notwithstanding he'd withhold from you ?

Templar. [*Hotly*] Will he or will he not ? He is found out.

This babbler of equality and tolerance

Found out ! And on the heels of this Jew wolf

In philosophic sheep's wool I shall put

Dogs that will undisguise him.

Saladin. [*Earnestly*] Calmly, Christian !

Templar. What, calmly, Christian ! Jew and Mussulman

Will have but Jew and Mussulman ; shall Christian

Alone not dare make Christians ?

Saladin. Calmly, Christian !

Templar. [*Composedly.*] The weight of this reproach which Saladin

Crams in one word, I feel it, ah, could I

But know how Assad in my place had taken it.

Saladin. Not so much better ! Perhaps with as much rage !

But who so soon has taught thee even like him

To pierce me with a word ? And verily

If these things be exactly as thou sayest,

I cannot find in them my thought of Nathan.

Meanwhile he is my friend, and friends of mine
Must not one with the other come to strife.
Then, be advised, walk warily. Give him not
A prey to the fanatics of your rabble !
Stir not the pool ; vengeance on him your priests
Would bind on me for duty. To no Jew,
No Mussulman, be thou in vain a Christian !

Templar. 'Twere soon too late for that ; but I am warned
Even by the bloodthirst of the Patriarch
Who had in fancy chosen me for his tool.

Saladin. How ? cam'st thou first to him and not to me ?
Templar. Yes, in the storm of passion, in the whirl
Of indecision. Pardon me. Now no more,
I fear, wilt thou the features of thine Assad
Trace in my countenance.

Saladin. Was it not
This very fear that hurt ! Methinks, I know
Error and virtue often dwell together.
Go, seek for Nathan as he sought for thee,
And bring him hither. 'Tis my part to bring you
To reconciliation. For the maiden's sake
Be serious, and be calm, for she is thine.
Perhaps already Nathan understands
That, even swine's flesh withheld, he has brought up
A Christian child ! Go, find him.

[The Templar goes out, and Sittah stands up.]

SCENE V

Saladin and Sittah

Sittah. Strange, how strange !

Saladin. Is it not, Sittah ? Must not brother Assad
Have been a bright and beauteous boy ? See here.

Sittah. If he was like this, and the Templar sat not
For this dear picture. But, my Saladin,
How could'st thou now forget to question him
About his parents ?

Saladin. And most specially
His mother ? if his mother never came
Into this region ? What ?

Sittah. Be sure to ask him !

Saladin. O, nothing were more likely ! Assad was
With Christian fair ones such a favourite
And to fair Christians so devoted too,
That once the story ran—but no, but no ;
I will not speak of that. Enough, I have him
Once more ! And will with all his faults
And all the fancies of his tender heart,
Receive him. Oh, this maiden that he loves
Nathan must give him. Think'st thou not ?

Sittah.

Not *give* him,

Leave him.

Saladin. Certainly ! What right has Nathan,
If he is not her father, over her ?
He who preserved her in her mortal peril
Alone can take the unknown father's rights.

Sittah. Then, *Saladin*, how if thou did'st straightway
Take the girl to thee and withdrew her straightway
From the illegal holder.

Saladin. Were that needful ?

Sittah. Not needful, truly. 'Tis my curious heart
Alone that drives me to th' advice, because
Of certain men I'm fain to know at once
What kind of girl they love.

Saladin. Well, *Sittah*, send
And have her brought to us.

Sittah. O, may I, brother ?

Saladin. Only, spare Nathan ! Nathan must by no means
Believe that one would part the girl by force
From him.

Sittah. Be not afraid of that.

Saladin. And I
I must myself see where Al-Hafi hides.

SCENE VI

SCENE : *The open court in Nathan's house, opposite the palm-tree grove, as in Scene I of Act I. Part of the wares and jewels lies unpacked, of which they are speaking*

Nathan and Daja

Daja. O, all are splendid ; choicest of the choice !
O, everything as fits your generous hand.
Where do they make this lovely silver stuff

Threaded with the gold tendrils? What's its cost?
A wedding dress indeed! No queen could ask
A better.

Nathan. Wedding dress? Why call it so?

Daja. Why, yes; of course you did not think of that
In buying it. But, Nathan, verily
That and nought else it is, a wedding dress
As if bespoken. The white ground, an emblem
Of innocence, the heavy golden threads,
That wind about this ground in every part,
Emblem of riches See you? It is lovely.

Nathan. Why all this wit? A wedding dress for whom
Do you thus emblemize so learnedly?
Are you, then, bride?

Daja. I?

Nathan. Who, then?

Daja. I? Good God!

Nathan. Who, then? Whose wedding dress is this you prate
of?

All this is yours, and for no other.

Daja. Mine?

Is meant for me? And is it not for Recha?

Nathan. What I have brought for Recha, they have packed
Apart. Come, take your goods and chattels!

Daja. Templar!

Not I, were they the treasures of the world,
I will not touch them till you swear to me
To use the happy chance that Heaven has given you
And will not give, perhaps, a second time.

Nathan. Make use? Whereof? A happy chance, of what?

Daja. O, this pretence of blindness! In two words,
The Templar Knight loves Recha. Give her to him;
Therewith at once your sin, your sin whereof
I can no more keep silence, has an end.
So will the girl come once again 'mongst Christians,
Become once more that which she was and is.
And you, for all the goodness you have shown us,
For which our gratitude can never cease,
Shall not have merely heaped up coals of fire
On your own head.

Nathan. Ah! the old harp again

But only fitted with another string
That neither can be stilled nor kept in tune.

Daja. How so?

Nathan. I like this Templar, and would rather
Recha had him than any in the world.

But yet . . . have patience with me yet a while.

Daja. Patience! O Patience!—is not this your own
Old harp again?

Nathan. Only a few days' patience!
But look! Who comes along? Is't not a friar?

Go, ask him what he wants.

Daja. What can he want?
[*Goes up to him and asks.*]

Nathan. Give it—before he asks—(*aside*). Could I but come
Closer the Templar, not exposing him
The reason of my questions! Which if told
And the suspicion groundless, then for nothing
I had staked my fatherhood.) What does he seek?

Daja. He asks to speak with you.

Nathan. Well, let him come.
Go you meanwhile.

SCENE VII

Nathan and the Friar

Nathan. [*Aside.*] (How glad had I remained
My Recha's father. And, indeed, can I
Not yet remain so, tho' I lose the name?
To her herself I should be so forever
Did she but know the joy that were to me.)

[*To Daja.*] Go! What service can I do you, holy friar?

Friar. Really, not much. It gives me joy at least
To find great Nathan well.

Nathan. You know me then?

Friar. Why, yes; who does not? For so many me

You have left your imprint in their hands;

'T has stood in mine these many, many years.

Nathan. [*Reaching for his purse.*] Come, friar, come; I will
renew the print.

Friar. Have thanks! I should but steal it from a poorer;

Nothing for me! Permit me only to refresh

My own name in your memory. I can boast

To have laid something also in your hand

Not quite to be despised.

Nathan. Forgive me, then—

I am ashamed—say what was that? and take
As my atonement seven times its worth.

Friar. But first of all hear now the reason why
Only to-day is brought to my remembrance
The pledge I trusted to you.

Nathan. Pledge entrusted?

Friar. Not long ago I lay an eremite
On Quarantana, near to Jericho.
There came a robber-band of Arabs, broke
My little chapel down and my poor cell,
And dragged me off, their prisoner. By good chance
Escaped, hither I hied me to the Patriarch,
To beg another little resting-place
Where I could worship God in solitude
Until my quiet end.

Nathan. Be brief, good friar!

I stand on coals. The pledge! The pledge entrusted me!

Friar. Forthwith, Sir Nathan. Well, the Patriarch
Promised to find me settlement on Tabor
So soon as place were vacant, bade meantime
That I should dwell in cloister as lay-brother,
Where now I am, sir Nathan, where I long
A hundred times a day for Tabor. For
The Patriarch employs me upon things
That fill me with great loathing. For example:

Nathan. Quick, I beseech you!

Friar. Well, it comes, it comes!
Some one to-day has whispered in his ear,
That somewhere hereabout there bides a Jew
Who has brought up they say a Christian child
As his own daughter.

Nathan. [Taken aback.] How?

Friar. But hear me out!

As he commissioned me, if possible,
Forthwith to track this Jew; beside himself
With rage before this horrid sacrilege,
He deemed the sin against the Holy Ghost
Which cannot be forgiven—that is, the sin
That's held the greatest of all sins, altho',
Thanks be to God! we're not exactly sure
In what the sin consists—there all at once
My conscience woke, and then there came the thought
I might myself sometime have had the chance

To do th' unpardonable sin Come, say ;
Did once a groom just eighteen years gone by
Bring you a little daughter three weeks old ?

Nathan. How ? what ? Well, frankly—it is true.

Friar. Ay, look upon me here. That groom am I.

Nathan. You are ?

Friar. The lord from whom I bro't you her

Was, 'less I err, one lord Von Filnek. Wolf Von Filnek !

Nathan. Right ! Yes ; it was so.

Friar. For the mother died

In bringing her to birth, and the sad father
Was called all suddenly to march 'gainst Gaza,
Where the poor worm could not accompany,
So sent her unto you. And met I not
With you in Darun ?

Nathan. Right, quite right !

Friar. It were

No wonder if my memory should deceive me.
I've had so many masters, and with him
I served so short a term ; soon after this
He dwelt at Ascalon ; he was to me
Ever a gracious master.

Nathan. A man indeed !

Whom I have much to thank for ; from my head
Not once but many times he warded off
The spear's thrust.

Friar. Beautiful ! More gladly, then,

To your good care you took his little one.

Nathan. That you may well believe.

Friar. Where is it, then ?

You will not, surely, say the babe is dead ?

O let it not be dead ! If only none

Knows of the matter. There are other ways.

Nathan. What are these ways you mean ?

Friar. Come, Nathan, trust me !

For see, this is my notion ; if the good
That I intend to do should touch too close
On what is evil, rather I refrain
From the good deed ; for what is ill we can
Without much dubitation recognise,
But not so well what's good. 'Twas natural,
Quite natural, that if the Christian babe
You meant to bring up well and happily

It should be as your own ; no unjust claim.
Have you then done so, with a faithful love,
With father-care, to be rewarded thus ?
That rings not true to me. Surely more wise,
More prudent had it been, by other's hand
To have reared up the Christian little one
In Christian faith ; but then you had not loved
Your friend's dear babe. And tender babes need love,
Were 't even a wild beast's love, in their first years,
More than they need our Christianity.
For Christianity there's always time
If the girl only sound in body and soul
Grows up before your eyes, then in God's sight
What she was first, remains she. And has not
The Christian doctrine, after all, been built
Upon the Jewish ? It has often vexed me,
Has often verily cost me tears to think
That Christians could so utterly forget
The Lord of their Redemption was a Jew.

Nathan. Good brother, you must be my advocate
If hatred and hypocrisy should rise
Against me for one act—ah, for one act !
You only, you alone must know of it.
But take the secret with you to your grave !
For never yet did vanity persuade me
To tell it to another. To you alone
I tell it. Pious simpleness alone
Shall hear it For simplicity alone
Can understand the wondrous recompense
The godly man may earn for loving deeds.

Friar. I see you moved, a tear stands in your eye.

Nathan. You met with me at Darun with the babe,
Perchance you know not that three days before
In Gath the Christians murdered every Jew,
Man, woman, child of them ; perchance know not,
That among these my wife, and with her, too,
Seven hopeful sons were numbered, seven sons,
Who in my brother's house had taken refuge,
Were all together burned.

Friar. My God, my God !

Nathan. And when you came I'd lain three days and nights
In dust and ashes before God and wept.
Wept ? More ; had pleaded, argued it with God,

Raged, stormed, and cursed me and the world;
Sworn to all Christians and their faith a hate
Unquenchable—

Friar. Ah, I can well believe it!

Nathan. Yet reason by degree came back to me.

She spoke with gentle voice, "And yet God is!
This, too, is the decree of God! Well, then,
Come, practise what thou long hast understood;
Which of a surety is not harder than
It is to understand, if thou but wilt.
Rise up." I rose and cried to God, "I will!
If thou wilt that I will!" And at that moment
Did you dismount and handed me the babe
Wrapt in your mantle. What you told me then
And what I answered, I've forgotten—quite,
Only this much I know: I took the child,
Laid it upon my couch, kissed its soft cheek,
Kneeled on the ground, and sighed "O God, for seven
Already one Thou givest!"

Friar. Nathan! Nathan!

You are a Christian! By God, you are a Christian!
No truer ever was!

Nathan. Happy for us,
That what to you makes me a Christian, so
Makes you to me a Jew. But let us not
Thus make each other weak. Here we must act!
And though a sevenfold love hath bound me fast
To this lone stranger maiden, though the thought
Already kills me that once more in her
I am to lose my sons—if Providence
Again require her of me—I obey!

Friar. 'Tis finished! Even the course I have longed
To prompt you to, your own good heart has chosen.

Nathan. Yet it must be no rash first-comer think
To tear her from me!

Friar. No, truly, God forbid!

Nathan. Whoso hath not a greater right than I,
Must have at least an earlier. . . .

Friar. Verily!

Nathan. Which blood and Nature warrant.

Friar. Even so,

That's my thought, too.

Nathan. Come, then, name me the man

Who stands to her related, brother or uncle,
Cousin, or by what other tie of blood ;
From him I'll not withhold her—her so fit,
Created, reared, to be the ornament
Of any house or any faith on earth.
I hope, of this your master and his kin
That you know more than I.

Friar. No, hardly that,
Good Nathan, you've already heard how short
My time of service with him.

Nathan. Yet at least
You surely know of what house or what race
Her mother was? Was she, too, not a Stauffen?

Friar. Quite possible. Indeed, I think 'twas so.

Nathan. Was not her brother, that's Conrad von Stauffen,
A Templar?

Friar. Yes, unless my memory cheats me.
But hold ! It comes to me I have a book,
A tiny book belonging to my master,
Still in my hands ; I drew it from his bosom
When he was laid in earth at Ascalon.

Nathan. Well?

Friar. 'Tis a book of prayers ; a breviary, we call it.
This, tho't I, may a Christian man still use
Unshamed—though really I—I cannot read—

Nathan. No matter ! Tell me more.

Friar. In this small book
First leaf and last, written in his own hand,
There are inscribed the names of all his kin.

Nathan. O blessed news ! Go ! run ! fetch me the volume.
I'll buy it from you with its weight in gold,
And add a thousand thanks. O hasten ! run !

Friar. Right willingly—But it's in Arabic
All that my master wrote in't.

[*Exit.*]

Nathan. That's all one.
But bring it only. God ! if yet I might
Keep the dear child, and such a son-in-law
Win in addition ! if I might ! But now
Let be what will be. Who can it have been
Played the informer with the Patriarch?
I must not fail to ask. Could it be Daja?

SCENE VIII

Daja and Nathan

Daja. [*Entering in haste, agitated.*] Nathan, only think !

Nathan. Well, what has happened ?

Daja. The poor child

Was fearfully alarmed when she was called—

She has been sent for . . .

Nathan. Who ? The Patriarch ?

Daja. The Princess Sittah, sister of the Sultan.

Nathan. And not the Patriarch ?

Daja. No, Sittah ! Hear you not ?

The Princess Sittah sends and bids her come.

Nathan. Whom ? Recha ? Well, if Sittah sends for her,

And not the Patriarch . . .

Daja. Why think of him ?

Nathan. Have you of late not heard from him ? In truth ?

Nor whispered to him something ?

Daja. I ? to him ?

Nathan. Where are the messengers ?

Daja. They stand without.

Nathan. Then for precaution I myself will see them.

Come you ! If only nothing lurks behind,

From him.

[*Exit.*

Daja. And I—I fear quite other things,

Forsooth, an only daughter of a Jew

So rich as Nathan is, were no ill match

Even for a Mussulman. It is over,

All over with the Templar, unless I

Can dare the second step and to herself

Discover who she is. Courage, my heart !

Let me but use the moment well, when next

I have her by myself, and that may be

At once, when I accompany her. A first hint

At random dropped can do at least no harm.

Yes, yes ! 'tis now or never ! Boldly on ! [*Follows Nathan.*

ACT V—SCENE I

Room in Saladin's Palace, to which the sacks of money were borne, where they still lie

Saladin, and soon thereafter several Mamelukes

Saladin. [*In entering.*] There stands the gold then still. And none knows where

To find Al-Hafi, who most probably
Is somewhere set a fixture at the chess
Ev'n of himself oblivious, and if so

Why not of me? But, patience! Ho, what now?

A Mameluke. The wished-for tidings, Sultan! Sultan, joy!
The caravan is come from Kahira;
Safely arrived, with seven years' tribute drawn
From plenteous Nile.

Saladin. Bravo, my Ibrahim!
Thou art indeed a welcome messenger!
Ha! Ha! at last! at last! Your Sultan's thanks
For the good news.

Mameluke. [*Waiting*] (Well then, come on with it.)

Saladin. Why waitest? Thou mayst go.

Mameluke And nothing more
By way of welcome?

Saladin. What?

Mameluke. To messenger
No message-fee? Then I should be the first
Saladin learned i' th' end to pay with words.
This is itself a name: To be the first
With whom he played the niggard!

Saladin. Take thou then
One of the sacks there.

Mameluke. No, not now! Thou might'st
Wish to bestow them all on me.

Saladin What pride!
Come here! There hast thou two.—In earnest? Going?
Out-do me in your magnanimity?
For sure it costs thee much more to decline
Than me to give. O Ibrahim! What evil chance
Should thus befall me, thus, so short a time
Before my going hence, to change my nature?
Will Saladin not die as Saladin?
Then neither must he live as Saladin.

2nd Mameluke. Ho ! Sultan !

Saladin. If thou comest to announce . . .

2nd Mameluke. The caravan from Egypt is arrived !

Saladin. I know it.

2nd Mameluke. Came I then too late ?

Saladin. Wherefore

Too late ? Take for good-will one or two sacks.

2nd Mameluke. Say three.

Saladin. I see that you can reckon ! Take them—

2nd Mameluke. There still will come a third, if come he can !

Saladin. How so ?

2nd Mameluke. How so ? Most like he broke his neck !

We three were watching at the water-gate.

No sooner sighted we the caravan

Than each man sprang and hasted, sinews strained,

Up the long road. The foremost fell, and I

Won to the front and kept it till we reached

The City, but there Ibrahim, the scamp,

Knows street and alley better.

Saladin. O, he fell !

Was hurt, perhaps ! Go, friend, ride out to meet him.

2nd Mameluke. That certainly I will, and if he live

Half of these sacks I'll gladly render him.

[Exit.

Saladin. See, what a gallant, noble carle even he !

And who but me can boast such Mamelukes ?

And were it not permitted me to think

That my example helps them ? Perish the thought

That at the last they must accustom them

To quite another sort.

3rd Mameluke. Hail to thee, Sultan !

Saladin. Art thou the man who fell ?

3rd Mameluke. No, lord, I come

To tell thee Emir Mansor, leader of

The caravan, has dismounted.

Saladin. Bring him in !

Ah, he is here !

SCENE II

Emir Mansor and Saladin

Saladin. Welcome, my Emir ! Well,

How has all gone ?—Oh, Mansor, Mansor, long

We've waited thee . . .

Mansor. This letter will inform you,
What unrest in Thebais first your captain,
Your Abdul Kassem, had to quell by battle,
Ere we could venture to begin the journey,
The march thereafter I did expedite
As much as possible—

Saladin. Trust you for that !
And now, good Mansor, take without delay . . .
This, too, thou wilt do gladly . . . wilt collect
Fresh escort, for at once thou must away
On further travel, carry the best part
Of this rich treasure to my father's hold
On Lebanon.

Mansor. Most gladly will I do it !

Saladin. And take thou not an escort over weak.
On Lebanon things are not quite so safe.
You've heard? The Templars are once more afoot.
Be well upon your guard ! But come—where halts
The train? for I must see it, and myself
Set all in motion. Then I go to Sittah.

SCENE III

The Palms near Nathan's house, where the Templar is walking up and down

Templar. His house I will not enter, I'm resolved—
He'll show himself at last. How quickly, gladly,
They used to notice me at this same spot.
But I may still survive it, if he cease
To hunt me as he used when I came near.
Hm ! I am vexed at heart What is the cause
Of my embitterment? Sure, he said "yes";
Nor ever yet has he denied me Saladin
Hath promised, too, to bring him to accord.
Maybe the Christian roots in me more deep
Than does the Jew in him. Who knows himself?
How otherwise should I so grudge to him
The little prey he took occasion once
To stalk down in the Christians' hunting-ground?
No little prey, indeed ! That noble creature !
Creature, but whose? O surely not the slave's
Who set afloat upon life's weary shore

The block, and then made off. Surely the artist's
Rather, who in the abandoned block perceived
The god-like form within and bro't it forth
By his so potent art? Recha's true father
Remains, spite of the Christian who begot her,
For evermore this Jew. So when I think
Of her as merely Christian girl, without
All graces which she only could derive
From such a Jew's upbringing, what, my heart,
Could then in her be found to please thee so?
Nothing, or little! Even her smile, were that
More than the soft, sweet quivering of a muscle;
Perchance what makes her smile not worth the charm
In which it clothes itself upon her lips;—
No; not her smile even! For I've seen it spent
In greater charm on idle jest and folly,
On mockery, on flatterer and admirer.
Has it then taken me captive, and inspired
The wish to flutter life away in its
Sweet sunny beams? In faith, I cannot tell.
And yet I am at odds with him who gave,
Yes, gave alone this higher worth to her,—
How so, and why? Have I then earned that laugh
Of Saladin at parting? Bad enough
To think that Saladin conceived me so!
How small he must have thought me, despicable!
And all about a girl. It must not be,
Curd, Curd, it shall not be. Then turn and take
Another road. May it not be that all
That Daja spoke was only idle talk,
And difficult to prove?—See, there at last
He comes, in eager converse, from his house!
Converse, with whom? With him? with my old friar?
Ha! then he knows it all, and is betrayed
Already to the Patriarch. What have I wrought
In my perversity! O that one spark,
One little flash of passion, should avail
To burn away our brain's best elements!
Resolve and quickly what must now be done,
And here aside I'll wait them, if perhaps
By happy chance the friar quit his presence.

SCENE IV

Nathan and the Friar

Nathan. [*As he approaches.*] Once more, good friar, take my utmost thanks !

Friar. And you the like, sir !

Nathan. I ? from you ? for what ?

For my self-will, that I thus push upon you
What you've no use for ? Yes, if but your will
Had yielded to me, but with all your heart
You strove against being rich, more rich than I.

Friar. The book, besides, does not belong to me,
But to the daughter :—it is surely hers,
The daughter's sole paternal heritage.—
Of course, she has yourself. And God forbid
That you should ever rue t' have done so much
For her.

Nathan. That I shall never, never ! Fear not that.

Friar. Ah but ! the Templars and the Patriarchs . . .

Nathan. Whatever harm they do me cannot make
Me rue what I have done : say nought of that !
And are you then so perfectly assured
It was a Templar set the Patriarch on ?

Friar. Can hardly be another. For a Templar
Shortly before was with him, what I heard
Seemed to confirm it.

Nathan. There is only one
In all Jerusalem, and him I know—
He is my friend, a frank and noble youth.

Friar. Quite so ; 'tis he ! But what one is, and what
The world makes of one, are not quite the same.

Nathan. Alas ! 'tis true !—Let whomsoever do
His worst or best ! For, friar, with your book
I can defy them all and go straightway
Therewith to Saladin.

Friar. Much luck to you,
And now I'll say farewell.

Nathan. And even yet
You have not seen her—Come again and soon.
If only nought come to the Patriarch's ear—
Yet what of that ? To-day tell what you please.

Friar. Not I ! Farewell.

[*Exit.*

Nathan. Forget us not, my brother !
God ! I could sink down, under open heavens,
Upon my knees ! to see the threatening knot
That often has appalled me of itself
Unloosen ! God ! How light I feel me now
Since there is nothing further in the world
I have to hide ! and even as in Thy sight
Can walk in men's sight too, who judge a man,
Must judge, by deeds alone.

SCENE V

Nathan and the Templar, who comes forward to meet him

Templar. Ho ! wait me, Nathan, take me with you.

Nathan. What !

Sir Knight, I thought to meet you at the Sultan's,
Where have you hid yourself ?

Templar. O, we have missed
Each other ; do not take it ill.

Nathan. Not I,

But Saladin . . .

Templar. You had just left his presence . . .

Nathan. You saw him, then ? 'Tis well.

Templar. It is his wish
To speak with us together.

Nathan. All the better,

Come, I was now upon my way to him.

Templar. May I ask, Nathan, who it was that now
Parted with you ?

Nathan. You do not know the man, then ?

Templar. Was't not that honest father, the lay-brother,
The good retriever that the Patriarch
Likes to make use of ?

Nathan. Maybe ; he is lodged
Certainly with the Patriarch.

Templar. No bad trick,
To send simplicity to clear the way
For rascaldom.

Nathan. Ah, yes, the silly, not the pious.

Templar. No Patriarch believes in piety.

Nathan. For him
I would go surety. He will give no aid

To 's Patriarch in any villainy.

Templar. At least he so professes. But did he
Say nothing to you about me?

Nathan. Of you?

Well, not indeed of you by name; in fact
He hardly knows your name.

Templar. Hardly, says he?

Nathan. Of a certain Templar, to be sure, he did
Say something . . .

Templar. What was it?

Nathan. Something by which
He once for all cannot mean you, my friend.

Templar. Who knows? But let us hear it.

Nathan. 'Twas that one
Accused me to the Patriarch.

Templar. Accused you?

Accused? That is, with his good leave, a lie!

Now hear me, Nathan! I am not the man

To shuffle and equivocate. No, what

I have done, I have done. Nor am I either

One to defend as well done all he does.

Why should I die for shame of one sole fault,

Having the firm resolve to make it good?

And know I not, forsooth, how far repentance

May yet advance a man? Hear me, Nathan!

I am in truth the Templar named by him,

The friar, am he who did accuse you, doubtless,—

And you yourself know what it was that vexed me,

What made the blood boil in my every vein,

Fool that I am! I came, my heart aflame

To throw me in your arms. How you received me!

How coldly, how lukewarmly, which is worse,

Much worse than coldly; and how sedulous

You were to show me out with formal phrase;

And how for answer you did stave me off

With questions all irrelevant, that now,

Even now I cannot think of and be calm—

Still hear me, Nathan! In my yeasty mood

Came Daja, whispering to my willing ear,

And threw your cherished secret at my head,

Which seemed to me to hold the explanation

Of your mysterious bearing.

Nathan. How so? Why?

Templar. Still bear with me ! Yes, I imagined then
That what one day you captured from the Christians,
You would not willingly lose to a Christian—
And the thought came to me to put the knife
To your throat straightway. . . .

Nathan. *Templar, was it good?*

Templar. Yet hear me, Nathan ! O without a doubt
I then did wrong ; there was no guilt in you.
That foolish Daja knows not what she speaks,
She hates you, and only seeks to entangle you
In dangerous business—O maybe, maybe !
But I'm a fool, raving now here, now there,
Now doing far too much, now far too little—
And so it maybe now. Forgive me, Nathan.

Nathan. If this is what you think me.

Templar. In a word,
I sought the Patriarch—but have not named you.
That is a lie, I say again. I put the case
Just as a general problem, so to have
His mind upon it. Even that, I know,
I might have left unspoken ; better so !
For knew I not the Patriarch already,
The knave he is ? and could I not myself
Have bro't it home to you ? How need I, then,
Bring the defenceless maiden to the danger
Of losing such a father ?—Well, what next ?
The Patriarch's knavery, ever the same,
Has bro't me to myself the shortest way—
For, hear me, Nathan ; listen, and hear me out !
Granted, he knew your name—even what of that ?
He's only able to take the girl from you
If she be yours alone and not another's ;
From *your* house only can he drag her off
Into his cloisters. So give her to me,
Give her to me only ; and let him come.
Ha ! let him try that game, to take my wife
From me.—Give her to me and quickly. Whether
She be your daughter now, or she be not !
A Jewess, or a Christian or what else !
All's one ! All's one ! I will not, either now
Or in my life henceforward, question you
Upon the matter. Be it as it will.

Nathan. Perhaps you fancy it were very needful

For me to hide the truth?

Templar. Be it as 't will !

Nathan. I have not yet to you or any man
Who had the right to know denied the fact
That she's a Christian born, and is no more
Than foster-daughter to me Wherefore, then,
You say, remains it undisclosed to her?
For that—to her alone need I excuse—

Templar. And such excuse you need not even with her—
Grant to her yet that she may never look
With other eyes upon you Spare her yet,
O spare her the disclosure. You alone,
You only, have to deal with her as yet.
Give her to me, I pray you, Nathan, I
Alone can save you her a second time,
And will save.

Nathan. Ah ! You could ! You could ! but now
No longer can. It is too late for that.

Templar. How so, too late?

Nathan. Thanks to the Patriarch . . .

Templar. The Patriarch? Thanks? thank him? For what?
Does he wish to earn our thanks? For what?

Nathan. That we now know to whom she is related,
Now know to whose hands she can be delivered.

Templar. He who would thank him for yet further good,
Thank him for this !

Nathan. 'Tis from those hands that now
You must receive her, not from mine.

Templar. Poor Recha !
How all things thrust at you, poor Recha ! What
Were luck for other orphans still becomes
Ill-luck for you—and, Nathan, where are they,
These kinsfolk ?

Nathan. Where they are ?

Templar. And who they are ?

Nathan. A brother in'espécial has been found
It is to him that you must sue for her.

Templar. A brother ! What is he, this brother? Soldier
Or churchman? Let me hear what 'tis I may
Promise myself.

Nathan. Of these two I fancy
He's both or neither. As yet I cannot say
I know him well.

Templar. And otherwise?

Nathan. Most worthy!

One with whom Recha will agree right well.

Templar. But yet, a Christian! Now, really at times

I hardly know what I should think of you:—

Take it not ill, friend Nathan—Will she not

Be forced to play the Christian, among Christians?

And what for long enough she will have played,

She will at last become. Will not the tares

Spring up to choke the pure wheat you have sown?

And that scarce troubles you. For, spite of that,

You still can say that they'll agree right well,

Sister and brother?

Nathan So I think and hope!

If she miss aught with him, does she not know

She still has you and me, her friends for ever?

Templar What can she miss with him? Will not this brother

With food and clothing, finery and sweetmeats

Richly enough provide her? What then more

Can little sister want? Oh, certainly,

A husband! Well, him too, him too will brother

Find in good time! One's always to be found.

The better the more Christian! Nathan! Nathan!

O what a perfect angle you had formed,

Whom others now will have the chance to spoil!

Nathan No fear of that: the man will prove himself

Worthy of all our love.

Templar. O say not that,

Of my love say not that, which fills my soul

As nothing small or great can share with it:

But stop! Doth she suspect already aught

Of what is coming?

Nathan Maybe, although I know not

Whence she might learn it.

Templar. That's all one! She shall,

She must, in either case, know first from me

What 'tis her fate portends—And so my thought

Never to see her, or speak with her at all

Till I could call her mine—that thought is dead.

I hasten . . .

Nathan. Stop, whither so fast?

Templar. To her

To see whether this maiden soul is not

Yet Man enough, to take the one resolve
Worthy of her.

Nathan. Which is?

Templar. This, now no more
To ask of you or of her brother aught—

Nathan. And?

Templar. Then to follow me, even if she had
Thereby to be wife to a Mussulman.

Nathan. Remain : you will not meet her, she is now
With Sittah, sister of the Sultan.

Templar. Why?
Since when?

Nathan. And if you'd find at the same place
The brother that we spoke of,—come with me.

Templar. The brother? which? Sittah's or Recha's, say?

Nathan. Why, both mayhap. Come only : I pray you, come !

SCENE VI

In Sittah's harem. Sittah and Recha engaged in conversation

Sittah. How glad I am to know you, my sweet girl !
But look not so oppressed, so shy and timid !
Be merry. Come, speak freely ; I'm your friend.

Recha. O Princess . . .

Sittah. No ! don't call me Princess, call me
Sittah, your friend, your sister, call me rather
Your little mother—That's what I should like
To be to you—so young, so good, so clever !
What you must know, how much you must have read !

Recha. Read ? Sittah, now you mock your silly sister ;
Why, I can hardly read.

Sittah. “Hardly.” Romancer !

Recha. My father's hand a little. But I thought
You spoke of books.

Sittah. Why, certainly ; of books.

Recha. Now, I find books so really hard to read.

Sittah. In earnest?

Recha. Quite. My father loves not much
That cold book-learning, which dead letters cram
Into the brain.

Sittah. What ! is it so ? Indeed,
He's not far wrong. And yet the thousand things

You know !

Recha I only know them from his mouth,
My father, and of most of them I still could tell
How, where and why he taught me.

Sittah. Everything
Cleaves better so, the whole soul learns at once.

Recha. I'm sure that Sittah, too, has read but little.

Sittah. How so? If so, I am not proud of it.

Why think you so? What reason—now speak out !

Recha. You are so genuine, so unaffected, so . . .

Well, always like yourself. . . .

Sittah. Well?

Recha. Books, you know,

Too seldom leave us so, my father says—

Sittah. Ah, what a man your father is !

Recha. Ah, yes !

Sittah. How sure his hand and eye, they never fail.

Recha. 'Tis true, 'tis true, and this my father . . .

Sittah. What ails you, dear one?

Recha. O my father !

Sittah. God !

You weep !

Recha. My father—father—it must out !

My heart is bursting—give me air—I faint !

[Throws herself, weeping unrestrainedly, at Sittah's feet.]

Sittah. Child, what has happened? *Recha !*

Recha. I must lose him !

Sittah. You? lose him? What means this? Dear child, be calm !

O never, never ! Rise, and tell me all.

Recha In vain your vow is made to be my friend,

My sister.

Sittah. So I am, I am. Only rise up.

Else must I call for help.

Recha. *[Controlling herself and rising.]* Forgive ! forgive !

My pain made me forgetful who you are.

In Sittah's presence no moaning is of use,

And no despair. Reason calm and cold

Alone has power upon her spirit. He

Whose cause has that to aid him will prevail.

Sittah. I understand not.

Recha. O do not suffer it,

My friend, my sister, never suffer it—

Another father to be forced upon me !

Sittah. Another father ! forced upon you ? Who can

Do that or even think of doing it, my dear one ?

Recha. Who ? 'Tis my good, my wicked Daja, thinks

And more than thinks the deed, can do it. Ah !

You do not know her, this my good, my wicked Daja

Well, God forgive it her—and recompense her !

She has shown me so much good, and so much evil.

Sittah. Evil to you. Then verily little good

Can live in her.

Recha. Oh, yes, much good, much good—

Sittah. Who is she ?

Recha. 'Tis a Christian lady who

Has tended me from childhood, cherished me

With care so tender that I never missed

A mother's love. God make it good to her !

And yet distressed me too, and tortured me !

Sittah. And why, and in what matter ? Tell me, how ?

Recha. Ah ! the poor lady—let me tell you all—

She is a Christian—tortures me from love,

Is one of those enthusiasts who dream

They know, they only, the true way to God—

Sittah. I understand . . .

Recha. And feel themselves compelled

To lead all others who have missed this way

Back to the same—and scarcely can do other—

For be it true this way alone can be

The way of safety, can they be content

To see their friends upon another road,

Which leads to loss, to everlasting loss ?

Thus is it possible, for the self-same people,

And at the self-same time, to love and hate.

Yet even this is not what forces from me

Bitter complaint against her. For her sighs,

Her warnings and her prayers, her menaces—

I could have gladly borne—yes, willingly,

For they have brought ever to my mind such thoughts

As do one good. And whom does it not flatter

At heart to find oneself so prized and dear

To whomsoever that they can't bear the thought

Of everlasting severance.

Sittah. That is true !

Recha. But there is something else that goes too far,

For which I have no mental remedy,
Which patience cures not, nor reflection soothes,
Nothing !

Sittah. What's that ?

Recha. What she just now disclosed.

Sittah. Disclosed, and now ?

Recha. This very moment did.

On our way here we passed a Christian temple,
A ruin. Suddenly she stood still and seemed
To struggle with herself, with tear-dimmed eyes
She looked up first to Heaven, and then on me.
"Come, dear," she said at last, "the shorter way
Which passes through this temple will we take."
She goes, I follow her, my awe-struck gaze
Fixed on the tottering ruin. Now again
She stands; I look and find myself with her
On sunken steps of an altar all-decayed . . .
How think you 'twas with me, when with hot tears
And clasped hands she fell before me there,
Lying at my feet. . . .

Sittah. O Recha, my poor child !

Recha. And by the Almighty, who so many a prayer
Had heard there, and so many a wonder wrought
Besought me to have pity on myself—

At least to pardon, if she must disclose
The claim her church had on me—she went on—

Sittah. O you unhappy one—'twas my foreboding !

Recha. I was of Christian blood; had been baptized;
And was not Nathan's daughter—he not my father !
God ! God ! he not my father ! Sittah ! Sittah !
See me again all prostrate at your feet. . . .

Sittah. Recha ! Not now; rise up.—My brother comes !

SCENE VII

Saladin and the foregoing

Saladin. What's wrong, here, Sittah ?

Sittah. She is not herself.

Saladin. Who is it ?

Sittah. Ah, you know . . .

Saladin. Our Nathan's daughter ?

What's wrong?

Sittah. Come to yourself, my child! The Sultan . . .

Recha. [*Dragging herself on her knees to the Sultan's feet, her head bent to the ground.*] I rise not, cannot rise, and cannot see

The Sultan's countenance, cannot behold
The bright reflection of eternal justice
And goodness in his eyes, and on his brow,
Until . . .

Saladin. Stand up!

Recha. Until he promise me . . .

Saladin. Come, then, I promise, be it what it will.

Recha. Not more nor less, to leave to me my father

And me to him! Nor know I not who else

Desires to be my father or can desire it.

I do not want to know. But is 't alone

The blood that makes the father, only blood?

Saladin. [*Raising her up.*] I see it all! Who was so cruel, then,

To put such fancies in your head. Is this,

Then, quite already settled, and proved true?

Recha. O, surely; Daja has it from my nurse.

Saladin. Your nurse?

Recha. Who dying told to her the secret.

Saladin. Oh, dying. Perhaps drivelling too? And were it

Even true—You know, the blood, the blood alone

Can never make the father, hardly makes

The father of a beast, but gives at best

The foremost right to earn the name indeed.

Then be not yet affrighted—cast off fears!

Hearken, what think you? When the fathers twain

Contend for you, leave both, and take a third!

Take me, then, for your father.

Sittah. Oh, yes, yes!

Saladin. A right good father I will be to you!

But stop! I've thought of something better still.

What need have you of fathers, after all?

Suppose they die? Let's look about in time

For one who can keep step with us in living!

Know you of none?

Sittah. Now, do not make her blush!

Saladin. That is exactly what I want to do:

For blushing makes the ugliest beautiful,

And will it not make fairer yet the fair?

I have your father Nathan here by me

And one besides—bethink you, can you guess?

Hither? If you'll permit me only, Sittah?

Sittah. My brother!

Saladin. Will you blush before him now?

Recha. Before whom? Blushing?

Saladin. . . . Little Hypocrite!

Well, then, go pale instead! Even as you will

And can, too.

[*A female slave steps in and approaches Sittah.*

What, already are they here?

Sittah. Good; let them enter—Brother, it is they.

SCENE VIII AND LAST

Nathan and the Templar to the foregoing

Saladin. Welcome, my dear good friends! Nathan, to you,

To you before all else 'tis duty and joy

To tell you that as soon as pleases you,

Your gold can be restored. . . .

Nathan. Nay, Sultan, nay!

Saladin. Yea, more, am now prepared to further you—

Nathan. Sultan!

Saladin. My caravan is here, and I am rich

Beyond my hopes, richer than e'er I was.

Come, tell me, is there no fine enterprise

Where I can help you, something great? I know

Of ready cash you cannot have too much,

You merchant people!

Nathan. And why speak you first

Of such a trifle? I see there an eye

In tears; to dry them touches me more closely,

[*Goes to Recha.*

You've wept? And why—You still are mine?

Recha. My father!

Nathan. We understand each other: so, enough!

Be cheerful, be composed. If still your heart

Remains your own! And if no other loss

Does threaten it, for sure your father is

Still yours, unlost!

Recha. O no, no other loss!

Templar. No loss besides? Then I myself have cheated—

What one fears not to lose, one never thought

That one has held or ever wished to hold—
Let be !—let be ! Nathan, this alters all !
O Saladin, we came at your command,
But now I see I have misled you quite,
Trouble yourself no more !

Saladin. Young man, again
You puzzle me : and are we bound to read
The riddle that you set ?

Templar. Sultan, you see,
You hear, is 't not enough ?

Saladin. Ay, verily ;
'Tis bad enough that you were not more sure
Of what concerns you most.

Templar. I am sure *now* !

Saladin. He who presumes upon a good deed done,
Takes it all back. What you have saved is not
Therefore your own possession. Otherwise
The thief whose greed bade plunge into the fire,
He were your rival here !

[*Going to Recha, to lead her to the Templar.*

Come, dear maid,
Come, judge him not so strictly. He would be
Another, if he were less warm and proud :
He would have let it be, the saving you.
Set one thing 'gainst another. Make him shamed !
Do that which would become him best to do,
Confess your love to him ! offer yourself !
And if he should disdain you, or forget
How far, far more in this you do for him
Than what he did for you . . . What has he then
Done for you ! Let himself be scorched a trifle !
Is that so much ? . . . then say I he has nothing
Of my dear brother's nature, of my Assad,
He bears about his mask but not his heart.
Come, dear one . . .

Sittah. Go, my dear one, go ! It is
But little this—to tell your gratitude ;
I call it nought.

Nathan. Stop, Saladin ! Stop, Sittah !

Saladin. You, too ?

Nathan. Here's one more still to speak a word. . . .

Saladin. Who questions that ? To such a foster-father
A voice belongs of right ; yea, the first voice—

Hear me; I know the matter through and through.

Nathan. Nay, not yet all. I speak not of myself.

There is another, whom, O Saladin,

I beg you first to hear.

Saladin. And who is he?

Nathan. Her brother.

Saladin. Brother of Recha?

Nathan. Yes.

Recha. My brother? Have I indeed a brother?

Templar. Where?

Where is this brother? Is he here? 'Tis here

That I should meet him.

Nathan. Patience only!

Templar. [*Bitterly.*] He

Has found a father to her—will he not

Contrive to find a brother?

Saladin. Only that

Was wanting! Christian, such a low

Suspicion had not crossed my Assad's lips.

Good! But continue, Nathan! Pardon him!

Nathan. I do forgive him freely—who can say

What we in his place, at his age had thought?

[*Going to him in friendly manner.*]

Suspicion, Knight, must follow on distrust;

If you had only granted me to know

Your true name from the first . . .

Templar. How?

Nathan. You're no Stauffen!

Templar. Who am I, then?

Nathan. Your name's not Curd von Stauffen.

Templar. And what, then, is my name?

Nathan. 'Tis Len von Filnek.

Templar. What?

Nathan. See, you start!

Templar. With reason! Who says so?

Nathan. I; I, who more, much more, can tell you, but

Accuse you of no lie.

Templar. No?

Nathan. 'Twell may be

The other name is also yours of right.

Templar. That I should think!

(*Aside:* God gave that word to him.)

Nathan. For, you must hear—your mother was a Stauffen.

Her brother, he who brought you up from childhood,
To whom your parents trusted you in Germany
When, driven from it by the troubled skies,
They landed here for refuge—he was named
Conrad von Stauffen, may have made you child
Of his adoption. Is it long ago

Since you came hither with him? Lives he still?

Templar. What shall I say? It is so, truly, Nathan,
Himself is dead. I came here with the last
Reinforcement of our Order. But all this—
What of it—when we speak of Recha's brother?

Nathan. Your father . . .

Templar. How? Have you, then, known my father?
Him also?

Nathan. Yes, my much-loved friend he was—

Templar. He was your friend? Nathan, is 't possible?

Nathan. Called himself Wolf von Filnek; but was not
A German.

Templar. Know you that, too?

Nathan. Yes, he had
A German wife, and only for short time
Accompanied her to Germany. . . .

Templar. No more,
I beg—but Recha's brother? Recha's brother?

Nathan. Are you!

Templar. I? I her brother?

Recha. He my brother?

Sittah. Both of one house.

Saladin. One house!

Recha. [*Going towards him*] Ah, brother mine!

Templar. [*Drawing back.*] Her brother!

Recha. It can't be, can't be, his heart

Knows nought of it.—We are impostors—God!

Saladin. [*To the Templar.*] Impostors? How? what think you?
can you think it?

Yourself are an impostor—all things false

In you—face, voice, and bearing! Nothing yours!

Not to know such a sister. Templar, go!

Templar. [*Approaching him humbly.*]
Misread not, Sultan, my astonishment!

Mistake not in a moment one in whom

You think that nought of Assad can be seen,

Both him and me!

[*Hastening to Nathan.*]

You give to me and take ;
Both, Nathan, with full hands. No, no, you give
More than you take ! yes, infinitely more !

[Falling on Recha's neck.

Dear sister, sister mine !

Nathan. Blanda von Filnek !

Templar. Blanda ? Blanda ? and not Recha ! no more

Your Recha ? God ! You disinherit her !

You give her back her Christian name and place,

You cast her off for me—O Nathan, Nathan !

Why should she thus atone—why, Nathan, why ?

Nathan. Atone ? for what ? My children, O my children !

Shall not my daughter's brother be my child,

He also, when he will ?

*[While he surrenders himself to their embrace, Saladin in
resileless amazement steps up to his sister.*

Saladin. What say you, sister ?

Sittah. I am so moved to see them—

Saladin. And I before

Greater emotion still almost recoil—

Brace you against it firmly as you can.

Sittah. How ?

Saladin. Nathan, but one word with you, one word !

*[While Nathan approaches him, Sittah goes to the brother and
sister to express her sympathy, and Nathan and Saladin
whisper.*

Hear me now, Nathan ! have you told them yet ?

Nathan. What ? That her father was no German born ?

Saladin. What was he, then ? What other land can claim
him ?

Nathan. That's what himself would never trust me with :

Out of his lips I know no whit of that.

Saladin. And was he then no Frank, no Westerner ?

Nathan. O that he was not that, he freely granted.

He oftenest spoke Persian.

Saladin. Persian ! Persian !

What need I more assurance ? It was he !

Nathan. Who, then ?

Saladin. My brother—O quite certainly

My Assad, 'twas my Assad, without doubt.

Nathan. Well, since yourself have lighted on the fact,

Take confirmation of it from this book !

[Handing him the breviary.

Saladin. [*Examining it eagerly.*] Ah, his own hand ! That, too,
I know again !

Nathan. They yet know nothing, rests with you alone
To tell them what this book contains for them.

Saladin. [*Turning the leaves*] Shall I acknowledge not my
brother's children ?

My nephews not acknowledge—not, my children ?

Not recognise them ? Leave them all to you ? [*Aloud again.*

'Tis they ! my Sittah, it is they in truth.

Both of them children of our brother Assad !

[*He runs into their embraces.*

Sittah. [*Following him.*] What do I hear ? 'Twere right no other
way !

Saladin. [*To the Templar.*] And, proud one, you must love me
after all ! [*To Recha.*

Now I'm in fact what I proposed myself,
Whether you will, or not !

Sittah. I too ! I too !

Saladin. [*Turning to Templar again.*] My son ! my Assad's son !
my son, my son !

Templar. I of your blood ! So were those dreams of old

With which they rocked my infancy to sleep

Much more than dreams !

[*Falling at his feet.*

Saladin. [*Raising him up.*] Look at the rascal now !

Somewhat he knew and yet would have allowed

Even me to be his murderer—Ah, but wait !

[*Amidst silent renewal of embraces the*

CURTAIN

falls.]

MINNA VON BARNHELM

OR

THE SOLDIER'S FORTUNE

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

BY

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

PERSONS

MAJOR VON TELLHEIM, retired.

MINNA VON BARNHELM.

COUNT VON BRUCHSALL, her uncle.

FRANCISCA, her maid.

JUST, servant to the Major.

PAUL WERNER, formerly Sergeant-Major in the Major's squadron.

THE LANDLORD.

A LADY IN MOURNING.

A COURIER.

RICCAUT DE LA MARLINIÈRE.

The action takes place alternately in the parlour of an inn and in a room adjoining it.

ACT I—SCENE I

Just. [Sitting dozing in a corner and talking in his sleep.] Swine of a landlord! You'll what? Come on, mate, set about him. *[He puts up his fists and is woken by the action.]* Hullo! at it again. I can't get a bit of shut-eye but what I find myself fighting him. If only he really got half the back-handers I . . . But it's light now! It's high time I went to look for the poor old master. He shan't set foot again in this perishing house if I have any say in the matter. I wonder where he spent the night?

SCENE II

Enter the Landlord

Landlord. Good morning, Mr. Just, good morning! What, up so early? Or should I say, not in bed yet?

Just. Say what you like.

Landlord. All I have to say is Good Morning, and you'd think that would be worth a civil answer; even from Mr. Just.

Just. Good morning to you.

Landlord. It makes a man touchy, does going without his sleep. I'll lay the Major didn't come home last night and you sat up for him.

Just. The things the man guesses!

Landlord. I speculate, I speculate.

Just. *[Turning to go.]* Your servant, sir.

Landlord. *[Stopping him.]* Oh no, Mr. Just!

Just. Very well, then—not your servant, sir.

Landlord. Oh, Mr. Just! I do hope you're not still angry about yesterday. You wouldn't bear malice overnight, would you?

Just. Yes, I would; and every night to come.

Landlord. Is that a Christian thing to say?

Just. Just as Christian as running an honest man out of the house because he can't pay on the nail, and throwing him into the street.

Landlord. Who'd do a godless thing like that?

Just. A Christian landlord—and to my master, such a man, and such an officer!

Landlord. Are you saying that I threw him out? I threw him on the street? I've too much respect for an officer to do that, and too much sympathy for a discharged one! I was simply forced to get him another room. Think no more about it, Mr.

Just. [*Shouting off*] Boy! I'll make it up in other ways. [*Enter potboy.*] Bring a tot; Mr. Just will take a tot, and good stuff, mind.

Just. Don't trouble yourself, Landlord. May the drop turn to poison that—but I musn't swear—not on an empty stomach.

Landlord. [*To potboy, who enters carrying a bottle of brandy and a glass.*] Give it here. Come. Now, Mr. Just, something first-rate, strong and mild and sound. [*He fills glass and offers it to Just.*] Good for a sleepless stomach.

Just. I really oughtn't to—but why should my health pay for his bad manners? [*Takes glass and drinks.*]

Landlord. Your health, Mr. Just.

Just. [*Returning glass.*] Not bad! But, Landlord, you're a curmudgeon.

Landlord. No, no, Mr. Just. Have another quick one; you can't stand on one leg.

Just. [*Having drunk*] Good, I must say, very good. Your own make, Landlord?

Landlord. I should say not. That's real Danziger. Genuine double-distilled Salmon brand.

Just. Look here, Landlord, if anything could make me play the hypocrite it's a drop of what you've got there; but I can't; I must speak out. And I must say, Landlord, you're a curmudgeon.

Landlord. In all my natural I've never had that said to me. Have another, Mr. Just. Three's the lucky number.

Just. Don't mind if I do. [*Drinks.*] Good stuff, real good stuff. But truth's good stuff, too. Landlord, you're a curmudgeon.

Landlord. If I was, do you think I'd sit and take that from you?

Just. Oh, yes. That kind don't often have guts.

Landlord. What about another one, Mr. Just? Four strands make a strong rope.

Just. No. Enough is enough. Anyhow, what's the good? I'd stick to my word down to the last drop in the bottle. You ought to be ashamed to have such good liquor and such bad manners! Fancy throwing a gentleman's luggage out of his room while he's out—a man like my officer, that's been

in the house by the month and the year, and paid you a pretty penny in his time, and never owed a stiver all his life, just because he's been a bit behind these last few months and not been so free with his money lately.

Landlord. But what if I needed his room urgently? What if I knew well enough the Major would gladly have moved out of his own free will if we'd been able to wait until he came back? Was I to turn away a party that's strange to this place? Was I to hand over that much profit to another landlord? I wasn't even sure anyone else could put her up. All the houses are very full just now. Could I leave a young, charming, pretty young lady like that in the street? Your master is much too polite for that. And he doesn't lose anything by it. Haven't I fixed him up with another room?

Just. Yes: underneath the pigeon-loft, with a view of the neighbours' chimneys——

Landlord. The view was all right until my wretched neighbours built that thing next door. And anyhow the room is very nice, and papered all over——

Just. Was, you mean.

Landlord. No, no, one wall still is. And your room next door, Mr. Just. What's wrong with that? There's a fireplace. It's true the chimney smokes a bit in winter——

Just. But looks all right in summer. I think you're making game of us, sir.

Landlord. Now, now, Mr. Just——

Just. Don't you get Mr. Just's rag out, or——

Landlord. Me get your rag out? The schnapps is doing that.

Just. A gentleman like my officer! Or do you think he's no officer just because he's retired? He can still break your neck for you. Why were you gentlemen in the catering trade so civil while the war was on? Why was every officer a worthy man and every soldier an honest, brave chap? Has a bit of peace made you so saucy already?

Landlord. What are you getting so excited about, Mr. Just?

Just. I'll get excited if I please. . . .

SCENE III

Enter von Tellheim

von Tellheim. Just!

Just. [Supposing the Landlord had spoken.] "Just!" Getting familiar, aren't we?

von Tellheim. Just.

Just. I was under the impression I was Mr Just to you.

Landlord. [*Noticing the Major.*] Sst! Mr. Just, Mr. Just, why don't you look round? . . . Your master!

von Tellheim. Just, I believe you're quarrelling. What did I tell you about that?

Landlord. Oh, your Honour, quarrelling? God forbid! Would your humble servant presume to quarrel with one of your household?

Just. [*Aside.*] If only I could catch him one on his cringing backside!

Landlord. To tell the truth, Mr. Just was speaking up for his master, and rather heatedly at that. But he was quite right; I esteem him all the more for it; I love him for it.

Just. [*Aside.*] Why aren't I allowed to kick his teeth in?

Landlord. The pity is he is exciting himself about nothing. For I'm convinced your Honour wouldn't have taken it amiss of me because I was forced . . . of necessity . . .

von Tellheim. Enough, sir! I am in your debt; you move my luggage out during my absence; you must be paid, and I must get lodgings elsewhere. Natural enough!

Landlord. Elsewhere? Then you intend to move, sir? What an unlucky man I am! I'm ruined! No, it shan't be. I would rather make the lady move out. The Major can't—won't let her have his room. The room is his. She must leave; I can't help her. I will go now, sir . . .

von Tellheim. Don't be a fool twice over, my friend. The lady must of course keep the room. . . .

Landlord. To think your Honour could suppose that it was out of mistrust and anxiety about getting my money! . . . As if I didn't know you could pay me as soon as it suited you. The sealed purse with five hundred louis-d'or written on it that's in your writing-desk . . . it's in good hands. . . .

von Tellheim. I should hope so. And the rest of my things too. Just will take them over as soon as he's paid you the bill.

Landlord. I promise you, it gave me a shock when I saw that purse. I always considered your Honour a sensible, prudent man, that would never spend himself right out. But still . . . if I'd guessed there was cash in the desk. . . .

von Tellheim. You would have acted more politely towards me. I understand you. Now go, sir, leave me alone. I have something to say to my servant.

Landlord. But, sir . . .

von Tellheim. Come, Just, this gentleman will not permit me to tell you what to do in his house.

Landlord. I'm just going, sir. My whole house is at your service.
[Exit.]

SCENE IV

Just. Garrh !

von Tellheim. What's the matter ?

Just. I'm choking with rage.

von Tellheim. You're more likely to have an apoplexy.

Just. And you, sir. I don't recognize you any more, sir.

Strike me dead if you aren't that malicious, hard-hearted devil's guardian angel ! I'd have swung for him if I'd been able to get my hands on his windpipe . . . I'd have bitten him to death. . . .

von Tellheim. Bloodthirsty animal !

Just. Better an animal than a man like that !

von Tellheim. What is it you want ?

Just. I want you to feel how deeply you're being insulted.

von Tellheim. Well, and what then ?

Just. I'd like you to get your own back . . . No, the fellow's beneath your notice.

von Tellheim. But you'd like to get my own back for me ?

That was what I had in mind from the first. He would never have set eyes on me again and you would have paid our bill. I know you have the knack of throwing down a handful of money pretty contemptuously.

Just. You mean it, sir ? That would be a fine come-back ! . . .

von Tellheim. But one that we shall have to postpone. I haven't a halfpenny in cash left, and I don't know where to turn for any.

Just. No cash ! And what about that purse with five hundred louis-d'or in it that the landlord found in your desk ?

von Tellheim. That money was handed to me for safe-keeping.

Just. Well, but that hundred pistoles wasn't, that your old Sergeant-Major brought you four or five weeks ago ?

von Tellheim. You mean Paul Werner's money ? Why not ?

Just. You mean to say you haven't spent that ? Sir, you can do what you like with it. On my responsibility. . . .

von Tellheim. Really ?

Just. Werner heard from me how the Paymaster-General is holding up your claims. He heard . . .

von Tellheim. That I would certainly become a pauper soon,

even if I were not one already. . . . I am much obliged to you, Just. . . . This news prompted Werner to share his pittance with me. . . . I am only too glad to have found it out. . . . Listen, Just, make out your bill to me at the same time; this is where we part.

Just. What's that you say, sir?

von Tellheim. Don't speak now; someone's coming.

SCENE V

Enter a Lady in mourning

Lady. Excuse me, sir.

von Tellheim. Whom are you seeking, madam?

Lady. None but the honest gentleman whom I have the honour to address. You do not recognize me? I am the widow of your former Adjutant.

von Tellheim. But heavens, my dear madam! What a transformation!

Lady. I have but just recovered from the illness caused by the shock of hearing of the loss of my husband. I am sorry to trouble you at this early hour, Major. I am going down to the country, where a kind-hearted friend no more affluent than myself has offered me a refuge for the time being.

von Tellheim. [*To Just.*] Go; leave us alone.

SCENE VI

von Tellheim. Speak freely, madam. You must not be ashamed to tell me of your misfortune. Can I be of any service to you?

Lady. My dear sir . . .

von Tellheim. Let me assure you of my sympathy. Can I be of any service to you? You know your husband was my friend. I say my friend, and I have always been sparing with that title.

Lady. Who should know better than myself how very worthy you were of his friendship, and he of yours. You would have been his last thought and your name the last on his lips had not very nature reserved that sad privilege for his unhappy wife and son.

von Tellheim. Please stop, madam! I would willingly weep with you; but to-day I have no tears. Spare my feelings. You

find me in an hour when I might be tempted to murmur against Providence. . . . Oh, poor honest Marloff! Come, madam, how can I serve you? If, I say *if*, I am in a position to help you——

Lady. I must not go away without carrying out his last wish. Shortly before he died, he remembered he was in your debt, and implored me to pay it with the first ready money I could lay hands on. I have sold his kit, and now I come to redeem his note.

von Tellheim. What, dear lady, is that the reason for your coming?

Lady. It is. Please allow me to pay you now.

von Tellheim. No, no, madam. Marloff owing me money? That can hardly be. But let me see. [*Pulling out his pocket-book and consulting it.*] I cannot find anything.

Lady. I expect you have lost his note of hand, and anyway the note is of no importance. Allow me . . .

von Tellheim. No; I am not in the habit of forgetting such things. If I have not got it, that is proof that I never had it, or that it has been redeemed and returned by me.

Lady. But, Major . . .

von Tellheim. Assuredly, my dear lady, Marloff did not owe me anything. I cannot even remember his ever having been in debt to me. On the contrary, it is rather he who has left me his debtor. I have never been able to do anything to discharge my obligations to a man who for six years shared honour and danger, good luck and bad with me. I will not forget that he leaves a son after him. He shall be my son as soon as I am in a position to be his father. The difficulties in which I find myself at this moment . . .

Lady. Generous man! But do not think too meanly of me either. Take the money, Major. Then at least my mind will be set at rest.

von Tellheim. And how can that be done better than by the assurance that the money does not belong to me? Or would you have me rob my friend's orphan of his schooling? For it would be robbing him in the fullest sense of the word. It belongs to him; put it by for him.

Lady. I understand you. Forgive me if I have not yet learned how to accept charity. But how do you come to know that a mother would do for her son what she would not do to save her own life? Now I must go. . . .

von Tellheim. I wish you a good journey! I do not ask you to

send me news of yourself. It might reach me at a time when I could not turn it to account. But one thing more—the most important, and I had almost forgotten it. Marloff still has claims against the Paymaster of our old regiment. His claims are as well-founded as mine. If mine are met, his must be met too. I'll answer for it. . . .

Lady. Oh, Major . . . but I would rather not speak. To plan such charity is, in the sight of Heaven, to have performed it. Accept my tears and the reward of Heaven. *[Exit.]*

SCENE VII

von Tellheim. Poor, brave woman! I must not forget to destroy the note. *[Takes papers from his pocket-book and tears them up]* How can I be sure that my own wants might not at some time tempt me to make use of it?

SCENE VIII

Enter Just

von Tellheim. You there, Just?

Just. *[Wiping his eyes.]* Yes.

von Tellheim. Have you been crying?

Just. I was writing my bill out in the kitchen, and it's full of smoke. Here it is, sir.

von Tellheim. Give it to me.

Just. Have a heart, sir. I know no one has one for you; but . . .

von Tellheim. What do you want?

Just. It's like a death-sentence, giving you notice.

von Tellheim. I can no longer use your services; I must learn to look after myself without servants. *[Opening and reading out the bill.]* "What the Major owes me: Three and a half months' pay at six dollars a month, 21 dollars. Paid petty cash since the first instant, 1 dollar, 7 groschen, 9 pfennigs. Sum total, 22 dollars, 7 groschen, 9 pfennigs." Well, and it's only fair that I should pay you for the rest of the current month.

Just. About the other side, sir . . .

von Tellheim. What else? *[Reads.]* "What I owe the Major: Paid the surgeon, 25 dollars. Paid for attendance and nursing while I was sick, 39 dollars. Loaned to my father when his farm was burnt out and looted, 50 dollars, not counting the

two captured horses given him. Sum total, 114 dollars. Less 22 dollars, 7 groschen, 9 pfennigs, as above. Remainder owing to the Major, 91 dollars, 16 groschen, 3 pfennigs." My man, you're mad !

Just I know well enough I've cost you a sight more than that ; but it would be a waste of ink to write it down. I can't pay you back. And if you was to take away my livery and all, which I haven't earned yet . . . then I'd rather you'd left me to croak in the infirmary.

von Tellheim. What do you take me for ? You owe me nothing, and I will give you a recommendation to one of my friends who keeps a better house than I do

Just I'm not in debt to you, and still you want to send me away ?

von Tellheim Because I don't wish to get in debt to *you*.

Just Is that all ? Then as sure as I'm in your debt, as sure as you owe me nothing, you shan't get rid of me ! . . . Do what you will, sir, I'll stick by you ; I *must* stick by you. . . .

von Tellheim. And your obstinacy, your insolence, your rough and uncouth behaviour towards all those whom you think have no right to give you orders . . . your malicious joy in other people's troubles, your thirst for revenge ? . . .

Just Paint me as black as you like, sir, you can't make me think worse of myself than I do of my dog. Last winter I was walking in the dusk along the canal and I heard something crying. I climbed down the bank and grabbed at the place where the noise came from, thinking I was rescuing a child, and I pulled a poodle out of the water. That's better than nothing, I thought. The poodle followed me ; but I'm no poodle-fancier. I chased him away, but it was no good. I thrashed him away ; still no good. I wouldn't let him into my room of a night ; he slept on the doorstep. When he got too near I kicked him ; he yelped and looked at me and wagged his tail. He's never yet had a bite to eat from my hand. But I'm the only one he'll listen to and let touch him. He jumps about in front of me and does his tricks for me without being told. He's only an ugly poodle, but a very good dog for all that. If he keeps it up much longer I shall finish by giving up poodle-hating.

von Tellheim. [*Aside*] As I shall do with him ! No, there is no one who is wholly a monster.—Just, we'll stick together.

Just. Of course we will, sir ! How could you manage without a servant ? You forget your wounds and your gammy arm.

Remember you can't even get undressed by yourself. I'm indispensable to you, and though I say it as shouldn't, I'm a man that can beg and steal for his master if it comes to the pinch . . .

von Tellheim. Just, we *won't* stick together.

Just. That's all right, sir !

SCENE IX

Enter Servant

Servant. Listen, chum.

Just. What's up ?

Servant. Can you take me to the officer that was staying in that room [*pointing in the direction from which he entered*] yesterday ?

Just. I suppose I could pretty easily. What have you got for him ?

Servant. What we chaps always bring when we come empty-handed—a compliment. My lady has heard that he's been turned out on her account. My lady knows what's right and proper, so I'm to ask his forgiveness for it.

Just. Well, go on, beg his pardon ; that's him.

Servant. Who is he ? What do I call him ?

von Tellheim. My friend, I have already heard your mission. It is a superfluous courtesy of your mistress, which I acknowledge as I should. Give her my compliments. What is her name ?

Servant. Her name ? We have to call her " My Lady ".

von Tellheim. But her surname ?

Servant. I never heard it, sir, and it's none of my business to enquire what it is. I mostly manage things so that I change employment every six weeks. To hell with learning all their names !

Just. Good for you, mate !

Servant. I took on this job a few days ago in Dresden. I think she's looking for her young man . . .

von Tellheim. That's enough, my friend. I asked you about your mistress's name, not about her secrets. Off with you !

Servant. I wouldn't take service with him, mate !

SCENE X

von Tellheim. Look alive, Just, we must get out of this house !
I feel more embarrassed by the lady's courtesy than by the

landlord's bad manners. Here, take this ring; it's the only thing of value I have left, and little did I think that I should ever put it to such a use. Pawn it. Try and get eighty Friedrichs on it; our bill here will not be more than thirty. Pay it and move my luggage. Where to? Wherever you like. Some inn, the cheaper the better. Meet me at the coffee-house next door. I'm off now: make a good job of it.

Just. Don't you worry, sir.

[*Exit von Tellheim, but returns.*]

von Tellheim. Above all, don't forget to pack my pistols that are hanging behind the bed.

Just. I won't forget anything, sir.

von Tellheim. [*Exit and returns again.*] And another thing: take your poodle with you. Do you hear, Just?

[*Exit.*]

SCENE XI

Just. The poodle won't stay behind, anyhow. Trust the poodle for that! So the Major had this valuable ring put by, had he? Wearing it in his pocket instead of on his finger. Well, dear Landlord, we're not so broke as we look. Pretty little ring, I'll pawn you with the landlord himself. I know he's annoyed because you weren't frittered away in his house.

SCENE XII

T. N. SHIVAPU

Chemist

Enter Paul Werner **ALLAHABAD**

Just. Why, Werner here! Good morning, Werner. Welcome to town!

Werner. Blast country life. I can't get used to it again! Cheer up, lads, I've got a fresh supply of money. Where's the Major?

Just. You must have passed him on the way in. He was just going downstairs.

Werner. I came up the back way. Well, how is he? I'd have been here last week, but . . .

Just. Oh? What kept you away?

Werner. Just, have you heard about Prince Heraclius?

Just. Heraclius? Can't say I have.

Werner. Don't you know the great heroes of the East?

Just. Well, I know all about the Three Kings of the East that go after the star at Christmas time. . . .

Werner. Man, you don't seem to read the papers any more than you do the Bible. You don't know about Prince Heraclius, that brave man who has conquered all Persia and will soon be taking a swig at the Ottoman Porte? There's still a war going on somewhere, thank God, I was sick of hoping that something would start again in these parts. But they just sit tight and look after their skins. No, once a soldier always a soldier! In short (*looking round carefully in order not to be overheard*), I tell you in confidence, Just, I'm tramping to Persia for the purpose of making a few campaigns against the Turks under His Royal Highness Prince Heraclius.

Just. Not you?

Werner. Myself, no other. Our forefathers used to be great campaigners against the Turks, and so should we be too, if we were honest chaps and good Christians. I understand all right that a campaign against the Turks wouldn't be such fun as one against the French; but so much the more profitable, both in this life and the next. I tell you, those Turks have sabres set with diamonds, every man-jack of them.

Just. I wouldn't tramp one mile to get my loaf sliced by a sabre like that. You aren't going to be a fool and leave your nice farm, are you?

Werner. Oh, I'll take it with me. Can you guess how? I've sold it. . . .

Just. Sold it?

Werner. Sh! Here's a hundred ducats that I got on account; I brought them for the Major.

Just. What is he supposed to do with them?

Werner. Do with them? Eat, drink, gamble them away, just as he likes. The man must have money, and it's a shame the way the Paymaster is holding out on him. But I know what I'd do if I was in his place. I'd think, to hell with the lot of you here. I'm off to Persia with Paul Werner. What the hell! Prince Heraclius must have heard of the Major! Even if he hasn't heard of Paul Werner, his old Squadron Sergeant-Major. That brush we had with the Katzenhaeusers . . .

Just. Shall I tell you about it?

Werner. You tell me? I can see you don't even know what an order of battle means. I won't cast my pearls before swine. Here, take these hundred ducats and give them to the Major. Tell him to keep this lot for me, too. Now I must go to the

market. I've brought two loads of rye for sale. What they fetch he can have, too. . . .

Just. Werner, you mean well enough. But we don't need your money. Keep your ducats, and you can have your hundred pistoles back as soon as you like.

Werner. Why? Has the Major still got some money?

Just. No.

Werner. Has he managed to borrow some?

Just. No.

Werner. Then how do you live?

Just. On tick; and when there's no more tick and we get thrown out, then we flog what we've got left and move on . . . Listen, Paul, we've got to play a trick on the landlord.

Werner. Has he been annoying the Major? I'm on! . . .

Just. How would it be if we set on him some evening as he was coming out of the smoking-room and gave him a thrashing?

Werner. Set on him two to one at night? That wouldn't do.

Just. Or burn his house over his head?

Werner. Housebreaking and arson? . . . Man, it's easy to see you've been a camp-follower and not a soldier. [*Spits.*] What's up with you? What's going on?

Just. Your eyes'll pop out when I tell you.

Werner. So there's hell to pay here, is there?

Just. There is, listen to this.

Werner. That's fine. All aboard for Persia!

ACT II—SCENE I

Minna von Barnhelm's room at the inn

Minna. [*In negligé, looking at her watch.*] Francisca, we got up very early. Time is going to be heavy on our hands.

Francisca. How can one sleep in this horrible great city? What with carts and nightwatchmen and drums and cats and corporals, they never stop rattling and shouting, beating and yowling and cursing. It's as if the night were made for anything but rest. Will you have a cup of tea, my lady?

Minna. I don't care for this tea.

Francisca. Then I'll have some of our chocolate made.

Minna. Yes, have some made for yourself.

Francisca. For myself? I'd as soon talk to myself as drunk by myself. Yes, the time is going to hang heavy on our hands.

But when we get bored we must dress up and try on the gown in which we are going to make the first assault.

Minna. Why talk about assaults when I have only come here to demand capitulation?

Francisca. And that gallant officer that we turned out of his room, and sent our apologies to, can't be so very polite, after all, or he would have sent to ask if he might have the honour of waiting on us.

Minna. All officers are not Tellheims. To tell the truth, I only sent our apologies so as to have an excuse for asking about Tellheim. . . . Francisca, my heart tells me that my journey will be successful and that I shall find him.

Francisca. Your heart, my lady? Don't trust the heart too much. It is too ready to say what you want it to say. If the mouth were to speak as the heart does, the fashion of wearing padlocks on the lips would have come in long ago!

Minna. Ha! ha! You and your padlocked lips! That fashion would just suit me.

Francisca. Better hide even the prettiest teeth than have the heart popping out of them every moment!

Minna. Are you so reticent, then?

Francisca. No, my lady, but I'd like to be. People don't talk about the virtues they have, but rather of those they haven't.

Minna. Do you know, Francisca, you've made a very apt remark?

Francisca. Have I? Can you say "made" when it just came into my head?

Minna. Do you know why I think it so apt? It applies rather well to my Tellheim.

Francisca. You think everything applies to him.

Minna. Friend or foe alike admit he is the bravest man in the world. But who ever heard him talk of courage? He has the most upright heart, yet honesty and nobility are words he never uses.

Francisca. What virtues does he talk of, then?

Minna. He talks of none, because he lacks none.

Francisca. Just what I thought you'd say.

Minna. Wait a bit, Francisca, I remember now. He does talk a great deal about economy. In confidence, Francisca, I think the man must be a spendthrift.

Francisca. And another thing, my lady. I have often heard him mention his loyalty and truth to you. What if the gentleman were fickle, too?

Minna. Wretched girl! But do you mean it seriously, Francisca?

Francisca. How long is it now since he last wrote?

Minna. Ah me!—he has written only once since the peace.

Francisca. One more grievance against the peace! It's a strange thing how the peace was going to put everything right that the war spoiled, and now it ruins even the few good things that the war brought. Peace has no right to be so contrary. How long have we had it now? It's no use the post running normally again when nobody writes because they have nothing to write about. It's very dull when there's no news.

Minna. "Peace has come," he wrote, "and I approach the fulfilment of my wishes." But that he should only write that one single letter . . .

Francisca. And force us to hurry towards that fulfilment! If only we find him we'll make him pay for it! But supposing that meanwhile the man has fulfilled his wishes and we find that . . .

Minna. [*With passionate anxiety.*] That he is dead?

Francisca. Dead to you, my lady, in the arms of Another.

Minna. You little torment! Just you wait, and he'll pay you out for that! . . . But chatter on, or we'll fall asleep again. . . . His regiment was disbanded after the peace. Who knows what confusion of accounts and documents he may be involved in? Who knows but that he may have been posted to some other regiment in some out-of-the-way province? Who knows what circumstances . . .? There's someone knocking.

Francisca. Come in.

SCENE II

Enter Landlord

Landlord. Your ladyship permits? . . .

Francisca. Our Landlord? Please come inside.

Landlord. [*Pen behind ear, sheet of paper, inkhorn and sandbox in hand*] I have come, my lady, to wish your ladyship a most respectful good morning. [*To Francisca.*] And to you too, my pretty dear. . . .

Francisca. What a polite man!

Minna. We are much obliged to you.

Francisca. We wish you good morning, too.

Landlord. May I presume to enquire how your ladyship slept, this first night under my poor roof?

Francisca. The roof was not so poor, Landlord, but the beds might have been better.

Landlord. Do my ears deceive me? You did not sleep well? But perhaps the over-fatigue caused by your journey . . .

Minna. It may be so.

Landlord. No doubt, no doubt! Otherwise. . . However, should anything not be to your ladyship's liking, your ladyship has only to command.

Francisca. Certainly, Landlord, certainly! We're not bashful, least of all in an inn. We will tell you soon enough how we like things done.

Landlord. At the same time, I have also come [*taking the pen from behind his ear*] . . .

Francisca. Well?

Landlord. Doubtless your ladyship is aware of the wise ordinances enforced by our police?

Minna. No, I am afraid not.

Landlord. We innkeepers are directed not to entertain any traveller, of any sex or station whatsoever, for twenty-four hours, without reporting in writing to the proper quarter his or her name, place of residence, occupation, immediate business and probable length of stay.

Minna. I understand.

Landlord. If your ladyship will kindly oblige . . .

Minna. Gladly; my name . . .

Landlord. Excuse me one moment. [*Writes.*] "Datem, August 22, anno domini 1763, arrived at the sign of the King of Spain" . . . and the name, my lady?

Minna. Fräulein von Barnhelm.

Landlord. [*Writes.*] ". . . von Barnhelm. Arrived from . . .", whence, my lady?

Minna. From my estates in Saxony.

Landlord. [*Writes.*] ". . . estates in Saxony". Saxony, my lady, are you from Saxony? Well, well, Saxony!

Francisca. Well, why not? Is it a sin hereabouts to come from Saxony?

Landlord. A sin? God forbid, that would be a new sort of sin! So you come from Saxony! Well, well! Good old Saxony! . . . But as I remember, your ladyship, Saxony is not by any means small, and contains many . . . what shall I say? . . . districts, provinces. Our police are very particular, my lady.

Minna. I see. Well, then, my estates in Thuringia.

Landlord. Thuringia! That's better, my lady, that's more detailed [*Writes and reads out.*] "Fräulein von Barnhelm, from her estates in Thuringia, together with her chamberwoman and two servants".

Francisca. Chamberwoman? Would that be me?

Landlord. Yes, my pretty dear. . . .

Francisca. Well, Mr. Landlord, just you put *chambermaid* instead of *chamberwoman*. I hear the police are very particular, there might be a mistake that could make trouble for me when my banns are called. For I am still a maid, and my name is Francisca, surname Willig—Francisca Willig. I'm from Thuringia, too. My father was a miller on one of my lady's estates. The name of the place is Little Rammsdorf. My brother has the mill now. I came up to the Manor when I was very young, and was brought up with her ladyship. We are of the same age—twenty-one come Candlemas. I learnt everything that my lady learnt. I should be glad for the police to know all about me.

Landlord. Very well, my pretty dear, I will take note of all that in case of further enquiries. But now, my lady, the object of your visit?

Minna. The object?

Landlord. Has your ladyship a petition to lay before His Majesty?

Minna. Oh no!

Landlord. Or before our Supreme Court?

Minna. Not that either.

Landlord. Or . . .

Minna. No, no. I'm just here on private business.

Landlord. Certainly, my lady. But how would you describe that private business?

Minna. I would call it . . . Francisca, I think we are being interrogated.

Francisca. Surely, Mr. Landlord, the police won't demand to know a lady's secrets?

Landlord. Certainly, my pretty dear; the police want to know everything, everything—and especially secrets.

Francisca. Now then, my lady, what shall we do? Listen, Mr. Landlord . . . but this is strictly between us and the police alone!

Minna. [*Aside.*] What will the fool tell him?

Francisca. We've come to kidnap one of the King's officers.

Landlord. What's this? My dear girl . . .

Francisca. Or let him kidnap us. It's all one.

Minna. Francisca, are you mad? Landlord, the saucy girl is making fun of you.

Landlord. I should hope not! Or rather, she can have her fun with a nobody like me if she wishes. But with a high police official . . .

Minna. Well, now, Landlord . . . I don't know how to deal with this matter. I think you had better leave all this paper business until my uncle comes. I told you yesterday why he couldn't actually accompany me. His carriage met with an accident nine miles away, and he insisted that it should not mean another night on the road for me. So I had to come on ahead. He will be here in twenty-four hours at the latest.

Landlord. Very good, my lady, let us wait for him

Minna. He will be able to give a fuller answer to your questions. He will know how much he is obliged to disclose and to whom, and how much he need not divulge.

Landlord. So much the better! Obviously one cannot expect a young girl to talk seriously about serious things to serious people. [*Looking meaningfully at Francisca.*] . . .

Minna. Are his rooms ready for him?

Landlord. Completely, my lady, all but one. . . .

Francisca. From which no doubt you'll have to eject some honest man?

Landlord. Saxon chambermaids, my lady, seem to be very compassionate?

Minna. Really, Landlord, that was too bad of you. You ought not to have taken us in at all.

Landlord. May I ask why, my lady?

Minna. I hear that the officer who was dispossessed by us . . .

Landlord. Only a discharged officer, your ladyship.

Minna. What of that?

Landlord. And at the end of his resources.

Minna. So much the worse! He is said to have seen a great deal of service.

Landlord. But, as I told you, he is discharged!

Minna. The King cannot know of everybody's service.

Landlord. Oh yes, indeed, he knows them all.

Minna. Then he cannot reward them all.

Landlord. They would all have been well off if they had lived according to their station. But during the war those gentlemen lived as if there was no longer such a thing as "yours"

and "mine". Now all the inns and taverns are full of them, and a landlord has to be careful. I didn't do badly with this one, though. Even though he had no money left, at least he had money's worth, and I should have been all right leaving him in peace for two or three months more. But it's better to play safe. By the way, my lady, no doubt you know something about jewels?

Minna. Not particularly.

Landlord. How could your ladyship not know? I have a ring to show you, a valuable one. Indeed, my lady, there is one on your finger now that looks very fine, and the more I look at it, the more I marvel at its likeness to mine. Look! look! [*Takes ring from case and hands it to Minna*] How it sparkles! The middle diamond alone weighs more than five carats.

Minna. [*Looking at ring*] Where am I? What do I see? This ring . . .

Landlord. Worth easily a good fifteen hundred dollars.

Minna. Look, Francisca!

Landlord. I didn't hesitate for a moment to lend eighty pistoles on it.

Minna. Don't you recognize it, Francisca?

Francisca. It is the same! Landlord, where did you get this ring?

Landlord. Why, my dear, I hope you have no right to it?

Francisca. We have no right to the ring! . . . My lady's monogram will be on the inside of the case. . . . Show him, my lady!

Minna. It is he, it is he! How did you come by the ring?

Landlord. Me? In the most honest way in the world. Oh, my lady, you won't bring trouble and misfortune on me? How should I know what is written on it? During the war there was many a thing changed hands, with and without the owner's consent. All's fair in war, as the saying went. I suppose more rings have crossed the border from Saxony . . . Give it me back, my lady, give it me back.

Minna. Not before you tell me who gave it you.

Landlord. A man I would never have suspected; a good man in all other respects.

Minna. The best man in the world, if he was the owner. Bring him to me quickly. It must be he, or at least someone who knows him.

Landlord. But who, my lady?

Francisca. Can't you hear? Our Major!

Landlord. Major? That's right, he is a Major—the one that had this room before you and gave me the ring.

Minna. Major von Tellheim?

Landlord. Yes, von Tellheim. Do you know him?

Minna. Do I know him! Is he here? Tellheim here? He lived in this room? He pledged you this ring? How did he get into such straits? Where is he? Does he owe you money? . . . Francisca, bring the strong-box! Unlock it. [*Francisca puts strong-box on table and opens it.*] What does he owe you? Does he owe anyone else? Bring me all his creditors. Here's money and notes. All his.

Landlord. What do I hear?

Minna. Where is he? Where is he?

Landlord. He was here only an hour ago.

Minna. Hateful man, how could you be so unfriendly, so hard and cruel to him?

Landlord. Forgive me, your ladyship. . . .

Minna. Quick, bring him here.

Landlord. Perhaps his servant is still here. Would your ladyship like him to fetch him?

Minna. Would I like him to fetch him? Hurry, run; if you do I will forget how badly you treated him. . . .

Francisca. Come, Landlord, make haste! [*Pushes him out.*]

SCENE III

Minna. I've found him again, Francisca! You see, I've found him! I don't know where I am for joy. Rejoice with me, dear Francisca! But then, why should you? Yet you must and shall rejoice with me. Come, my dear, I will give you a present to make you glad too. Tell me, Francisca, what shall I give you? Do any of my dresses suit you? Which would you like? Take what you want, only be glad! I see you'll take nothing. Wait! [*Opens her purse.*] There, dear Francisca [*gives her money*], buy what you like. Ask for more if that is not enough. Only rejoice with me. It is so sad to rejoice alone. Come, take it. . . .

Francisca. I'd be robbing your ladyship; you're drunk, drunk with joy. . . .

Minna. And fighting drunk, too, girl; take this, or else [*presses money into her hand*]—and don't dare thank me! . . . One moment [*fumbling for more money in the box*], put this aside, dear Francisca, for the first poor wounded soldier that speaks to us,

SCENE IV

Enter Landlord

Minna. Well, is he coming?

Landlord. The contrary-minded, unmannerly ruffian!

Minna. Who?

Landlord. His servant: he refuses to go and fetch him.

Francisca. Please bring the rascal here. I think I know all the Major's servants. Which one is it?

Minna. Bring him here quickly. When he sees us, I am sure he will go. *[Exit Landlord.]*

SCENE V

Minna. I can hardly bear waiting for the moment! But, Francisca, you're still so cold. Don't you *want* to share my joy?

Francisca. I would with all my heart: if only . . .

Minna. If only?

Francisca. True, we have found him again; but in what a condition? From all we hear, things must be going badly for him. He must be unhappy; and for that I am sorry.

Minna. Sorry? Let me embrace you for that, dear playfellow. I will never forget that. I am only in love, but you are kind. . . .

SCENE VI

Enter Landlord

Landlord. I've had trouble enough getting him here.

Francisca. A strange face! I don't know him.

Minna. My friend, are you in Major von Tellheim's service?

Just. Yes.

Minna. Where is your master?

Just. Not here.

Minna. But you know where to find him?

Just. Yes.

Minna. Won't you make haste and fetch him?

Just. No.

Minna. It would be doing me a favour.

Just. Would it?

Minna. And your master a service.

Just. Maybe not.

Minna. What makes you think that?

Just. You're the strange lady that sent him your compliments this morning, aren't you?

Minna. I am.

Just. Then I was right.

Minna. Does your master know my name?

Just. No. But he can't abide ladies that are too polite, any more than landlords that are too rude.

Landlord. That's meant for me, I suppose?

Just. Yes.

Landlord. Then don't let her ladyship suffer for it, but bring him here quickly.

Minna. [*To Francisca*] Francisca, give him something!

Francisca. [*Trying to press money on Just.*] We do not demand your services for nothing.

Just. Or I your money.

Francisca. Tit for tat.

Just. I can't. My master ordered me to move out. I'm doing that now, and I'll thank you not to hinder me. When I've finished I don't mind telling him he's to come here. He's at the coffee-house next door, and if he has nothing better to do, who knows but what he might come. [*Making to go out.*]

Francisca. Why don't you wait? My lady is the Major's—er—sister.

Minna. That's it; his sister.

Just. I know well enough the Major has no sister. Twice in the last six months he has sent me to his family in Courland. Of course there's more than one kind of sister. . . .

Francisca. How dare you!

Just. I daren't, but you drive me to it. [*Exit.*]

Francisca. There's a cheeky fellow for you!

Landlord. I told you so. But don't mind him, for I know where his master is. I'll fetch him myself. . . . Only, my lady, I beg of you most humbly to make my excuses to the Major for having acted against my will towards a gentleman of such distinguished service. . . .

Minna. Make haste. I will arrange all that.

* [*Exit Landlord.*]

Francisca, go after him; tell him not to mention my name.

[*Exit Francisca, following Landlord.*]

SCENE VII

Minna. I've found him again! Am I alone? I must not waste the opportunity [*she folds her hands*]. And I am not alone, either [*looking upwards*]. One thought of gratitude to Heaven is the most perfect prayer! He is mine, mine! [*Stretching out her arms*] I am happy. And joyful. What sight can be more pleasing to the Creator than a happy creature! [*Enter Francisca*] Back again, Francisca? Are you sorry for him? I am not. Misfortune may be also a blessing. Perhaps Heaven took everything from him in order to restore everything—in me!

Francisca. He'll be here any minute. You're still in your *négligé*, my lady. What about dressing quickly?

Minna. Oh no. From now he will see me oftener like this than in full dress.

Francisca. Well, you know best yourself, my lady.

Minna. [*Short pause*] Really, girl, you've hit the nail on the head again.

Francisca. If we are pretty, we are all the prettier unadorned.

Minna. After all, must we be beautiful? But perhaps it is necessary for us to think ourselves beautiful. No, it is enough if I am beautiful only in his eyes . . . Francisca, if all girls are as I feel now, then we are strange creatures: tender and proud, virtuous and vain, voluptuous and pious—there, you don't understand me. I hardly understand myself. Joy makes one giddy, light-headed.

Francisca. Compose yourself, my lady, I hear him coming.

Minna. Compose myself! Am I to receive him calmly?

SCENE VIII

Enter Landlord and von Tellheim

von Tellheim. [*Sees Minna and hastens to her.*] Minna! My Minna!

Minna. Oh, my Tellheim!

von Tellheim. [*Suddenly hesitating and retiring.*] Excuse me, madam, I never expected . . .

Minna. To find Minna von Barnhelm here? Surely not! [*Advancing towards him as he draws back*] Am I to excuse you because I am still your Minna? May Heaven forgive you for leaving me still Fräulein von Barnhelm!

von Tellheim. [With a stony stare at the landlord and a shrug of the shoulders.] Madam . . .

Minna. [Becoming aware of the landlord and signalling to Francisca.] Sir . . .

von Tellheim. If neither of us is mistaken . . .

Francisca. Oh, Lord, whom have you brought to see us? Come quick and find the right man with me . . .

Landlord. Isn't this the right man? Of course he is!

Francisca. Of course he is not! Come, quick. I haven't said good morning to your daughter yet.

Landlord. Very civil of you, I'm sure. [Without moving.]

Francisca. [Taking him by the arm.] Come, let's go and make out the menu. Let's see what we can have to-day. . . .

Landlord. Well, to begin with, there's . . .

Francisca. Sh! quiet! If my lady were to hear now what she is to have for dinner it would ruin her appetite. Come, we must talk this over alone. [Forcibly leads him off.]

SCENE IX

Minna. Well? Are we still mistaken?

von Tellheim. I wish to Heaven we were! . . . But only one of us is, and you are she. . . .

Minna. What formality! Anyone may hear what we have to say to one another.

von Tellheim. And you are here! What are you seeking here, madam?

Minna. I want nothing now. I have found all that I ever wanted.

von Tellheim. [Drawing back.] You were seeking a happy man, worthy of your love, and you find . . . a most wretched one.

Minna. So you love me no longer? You love another woman?

von Tellheim. Ah, madam, he never loved you who could love another after you.

Minna. You pluck but *one* thorn from my heart. If I have lost your love, what is it to me whether a greater attraction or mere indifference has lost it me? You have ceased to love me and yet love no one else? Unhappy man, to love no one!

von Tellheim. You are right there, madam; he who is unfortunate must not love. He deserves his misfortune if he is unable so far to conquer himself; if he can be content to let her whom he loves share his unhappiness. How hard a victory is this! Since the day when reason and necessity enjoined

me to forget Minna von Barnhelm, what labour has it cost me ! I was beginning to hope that my effort would not be ever in vain . . . and now you come, madam ! . . .

Minna. Do I understand you aright ? One moment, sir ; let us see where we are before we go farther astray. Will you answer me one question ?

von Tellheim. Any question, madam. . . .

Minna. Will you answer me without evasion or prevarication ?

With nothing but a sober " yes " or " no " ?

von Tellheim. I will . . . if I can.

Minna. You can. Very well : notwithstanding the effort it cost you to forget me, do you still love me, Tellheim ?

von Tellheim. Madam, that question . . .

Minna. You promised to answer yes or no.

von Tellheim. But I added, if I could.

Minna. You can—you must know what is going on in your heart. Do you still love me, Tellheim . . . yes or no ?

von Tellheim. If my heart . . .

Minna. Yes or no !

von Tellheim. Well, then, yes !

Minna. Yes ?

von Tellheim. Yes, yes . . . but . . .

Minna. Patience. You love me still. That is enough for me.

What a tone I've fallen into with you ! A hostile, gloomy, poisonous tone ! I'll find my own again ! Now, my unhappy darling, you still love me, you still have your Minna, and yet you are unhappy ? Listen while I tell you what a conceited, foolish thing your Minna was, and is. She dreamt, she dreams, that she is your only happiness. Quick, unburden your unhappiness to her. Let her see how much it weighs against her. Well ?

von Tellheim. Madam, I am not accustomed to complain.

Minna. Good. I know nothing I admire less in a soldier, after bragging, than complaining. But there is a certain cold, indifferent manner of referring to one's bravery, and to one's misfortunes . . .

von Tellheim. Which is, at bottom, bragging and complaining ?

Minna. O you sophist ! In that case you should not have called yourself unhappy. Either keep silent or out with it. A reason, a necessity, that made you forget me ? I am a great lover of reason, and I have much respect for necessity. But let me hear how reasonable is this reason, how necessary this necessity.

von Tellheim Listen, then, madam. You call me Tellheim; the name fits me. But you take me for the Tellheim you knew in your own country, the man in his prime, full of purpose, full of the thirst for glory, master of a whole body and soul, to whom the lists of honour and of fortune stood open, who, though not worthy of your heart and hand, might hope daily to become more worthy of them. I am no more that Tellheim—than I am my own father. Both are of the past. I am a Tellheim discharged, a Tellheim wounded in honour, a cripple and a beggar. You promised yourself to the first, madam; will you hold by your word to the second?

Minna. That sounds very tragic. But, sir, until I find the first again, I am so enamoured of all these Tellheims that I must even make the best of the second. Your hand, dear beggar! [*Taking him by the hand.*]

von Tellheim. [*Covering his face, with his hat in his other hand, and turning away*] This is too much. Where am I? Leave me, madam. Your kindness tortures me. Leave me.

Minna What is the matter? Where are you going?

von Tellheim. Away from you!

Minna Away from me? [*Drawing his hand to her breast.*]
Dreamer!

von Tellheim. Despair will strike me dead at your feet.

Minna. Away from me?

von Tellheim. Away from you. Never to see you again. Or at least so determined, so firmly determined, to commit no base action, nor to let you commit any indiscretion . . . Let me go, Minna! [*Tears himself loose and exit*]

Minna. [*Following him*] Minna let you go? Tellheim! Tellheim!

ACT III—SCENE I

The parlour of the "King of Spain"

[*Enter Just, a letter in his hand.*]

Just. I've had to come to this blasted house again! A letter from my master to the lady that calls herself his sister. I hope nothing comes of this. Otherwise there'll be no end to message-carrying. I'd be glad to get rid of this thing, but I don't want to go into the room. These women ask so many questions, and I hate answering them. Ah! the door's opening. Just what I wanted—the little chambermaid!

SCENE II

Enter Francisca

Francisca [*Calling back through the door.*] Don't worry, I'll keep a look-out. [*Seeing Just*] Well! Look what's here! But you can't deal with a brute like that.

Just. Your servant. . . .

Francisca. I wouldn't want a servant like you . . .

Just. Now, now, it's just a manner of speaking. I've brought a note from my master to your young lady, his sister . . . it was his sister, wasn't it? Yes, sister.

Francisca. [*Snatching.*] Give it me!

Just. You're to be so good, he says, as to deliver it. After that you're to be so good, says my master . . . I'd not have you think it's me that's asking . . .

Francisca. Well, what is it?

Just. My master has rumbled you. I've a notion he knows that the way to a young lady lies through her chambermaid. As I was saying, my master asks you to be so good as to let him know if he can speak to you for a few minutes.

Francisca. To me?

Just. Excuse me if I've addressed you wrong. Yes, you. Only for a few minutes, but alone, quite alone, privately—*tête à tête*, as they say. It seems he has something out of the ordinary to tell you.

Francisca. All right: I've plenty to tell him too. Just let him come. I'm at his orders

Just. Yes, but when can he come? What time would be most convenient to you, miss? About dusk?

Francisca. What do you mean by that? Your master can come when he likes. And now be off!

Just. [*Going.*] With pleasure!

Francisca. Listen! One other thing. Where have the Major's other servants got to?

Just. The others? Oh, here, there and everywhere.

Francisca. Where's Wilhelm?

Just. The valet? The Major sent him on a trip.

Francisca. Oh? And where's Philip?

Just. The gamekeeper? He's in good hands, where the Major left him.

Francisca. Because he hasn't any shooting left, no doubt. What about Martin?

Just. The coachman? He's gone out for a ride.

Francisca. Fritz, then?

Just. The footman? He's been promoted.

Francisca. Where were you when the Major was billeted on us in Thuringia? You weren't with him then, were you?

Just. Oh, yes, I was his groom. But I was in hospital.

Francisca. Groom, eh? And what are you now?

Just. Valet, keeper, footman and groom, all in one.

Francisca. Well, I must say! Fancy letting so many good, honest men go, and keeping the worst of the lot! I'd like to know what your master sees in you.

Just. Maybe he sees an honourable man.

Francisca. That's precious little, just honourable and no more. Wilhelm was a different kind of man. So the Major sent him on a trip?

Just. You might say he sent him; he couldn't stop him.

Francisca. Meaning?

Just. Oh, Wilhelm did himself proud on that trip. He took all the Major's clothes with him.

Francisca. What? You don't tell me he skipped with the lot?

Just. No, I wouldn't exactly say that. Only that when we left Nuremberg he didn't come after us with them. . . .

Francisca. The dirty dog!

Just. He was a lad, he was! He was the boy for hairdressing and shaving and telling the tale and getting round the girls—wasn't he?

Francisca. Then the gamekeeper—I wouldn't have given him up if I'd been in the Major's place. Even if he couldn't use him as a gamekeeper, still he was a steady chap. Where did you leave him? In good hands, you said?

Just. With the Governor of Spandau.

Francisca. The jail? The shooting can't be so good in the exercise yard.

Just. Oh, Philip doesn't do any shooting there either.

Francisca. Then what does he do?

Just. Wheelbarrowing.

Francisca. Wheelbarrowing?

Just. But only for three years. He made a little arrangement among the Major's command to guide six of the lads past the sentries.

Francisca. I'm surprised at him. The scoundrel!

Just. Oh, he's a steady chap! A gamekeeper that knows every

track and footpath for fifty miles round, woods and bogs and all! And what a shot!

Francisca. What a good thing the Major still has that fine coachman!

Just. Has he still got him?

Francisca. I thought you said Martin was out for a ride? I suppose he's coming back?

Just. You suppose so?

Francisca. Which way did he go?

Just. To the horse-pond, on the Major's one and only saddle-horse; going on ten weeks ago now.

Francisca. And not back yet? Oh, the gallows-bird!

Just. Of course, he might have got drowned. He was such a good coachman. He'd been driving ten years in Vienna. We'll never get another like him. If the horses were going full gallop he had only to say "Brrr", like that, and they would stand like rocks. He was a good horse-doctor as well.

Francisca. Now I'm worried about the footman's promotion!

Just. No, no; he's got his deserts. He's a drummer in a garrison regiment.

Francisca. I might have known it!

Just. Fritz got into low company, and came home at all hours, ran up debts in the Major's name and was up to all sorts of disreputable tricks. To cut a long story short, the Major saw he wanted to get to the top of the tree by hook or crook [*imitating the hangman*]; so he put him on the right road to do it.

Francisca. The low fellow!

Just. But for a footman he was nippy on his feet, I will say. If the Major gave him fifty yards' start he couldn't catch up with him on his best charger. But, on the other hand, Fritz could give the gallows a thousand yards' start, and I'd stake my life he'd catch up with it. So they were all good friends of yours, miss? Wilhelm and Philip and Martin and Fritz? Well, well, Just bids you good day. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III

Francisca. [*Looking thoughtfully after him.*] I deserved that. Thank you, just! I rated honesty too low. I shan't forget the lesson. . . . Oh, poor man! [*Turns to go into M. von B.'s room, as landlord enters.*]

Landlord. Wait a minute, my pretty dear !

Francisca. I've no time just now. . . .

Landlord. Just a second ! Still no news of the Major ? I'm certain that can't really have been his leave-taking

Francisca. Why ?

Landlord. Didn't her ladyship tell you ? When I left you in the kitchen, my dear, I happened to come up to the parlour . . .

Francisca. Just by chance, to try and overhear something.

Landlord. My dear, how can you think such a thing of me ?

Nothing becomes a landlord less than curiosity. . . . I hadn't been here long when the door of her ladyship's room flew open. The Major rushed out and her ladyship after him. Both at once, and looking and acting—you should have seen them ! She caught hold of him, he tore himself loose ; she caught hold of him again. "Tellheim !" "Leave me, madam." "Where are you going ?" He dragged her as far as the staircase. I was afraid he'd sweep her down with him. But he managed to break away from her. She stopped at the top of the stairs, looking and calling after him and wringing her hands. Suddenly she turned round and ran to the window, from there back to the stairs and then into the parlour, up and down. I was standing just here. Three times she went past me without seeing me. Then she seemed to see me. But Lord love you, I think she thought I was you, my dear. "Francisca," she cried, looking full at me. "Am I happy now ?" Then she stared up at the ceiling, and again she says, "Am I happy now ?" Then she wiped the tears from her eyes and smiled and asked me again, "Francisca, am I happy ?" To tell you the truth, I didn't know how I felt. At last she ran to her door ; then she turned round again and faced me : "Why don't you come, Francisca ?" she says. "What is the matter with you ?" And with that she went into her room.

Francisca. Oh, Mr. Landlord, you must have dreamed it !

Landlord. Dreamed ? No, my pretty dear, you don't get all that detail in dreams. . . . I'd give a lot—and I'm not inquisitive—but I'd give a lot to have the key to that.

Francisca. The key to our door ? It's on the inside. We changed it round in the night because we were nervous.

Landlord. Not that sort of key. I meant, my dear, the key, the explanation, as it were, the meaning of what I saw.

Francisca. Oh, I see ! Well, good-bye now. When do we have luncheon, Landlord ?

Landlord. I was forgetting what I was really going to say, my dear . . .

Francisca. Well, be quick. . . .

Landlord. Her ladyship still has my ring; I call it mine because . . .

Francisca. You won't lose it

Landlord. I wasn't worrying about that; I only wanted to remind you. You see, I don't even want it back. I know well enough how she came to recognize the ring and why it looks so like her own. It is better in her keeping. I don't want it any more, and in the meantime I'll put the hundred pistoles I lent on it on her ladyship's bill. Will that be all right, my dear?

SCENE IV

Enter Paul Werner

Werner. There he is!

Francisca. A hundred pistoles? I thought it was only eighty.

Landlord. That's right, only ninety, only ninety. I'll do it, my dear, I'll do it.

Francisca. We'll see about that.

Werner. [*Coming up behind her and suddenly clapping her on the shoulder.*] Little girl, little girl.

Francisca. [*Startled.*] Eh!

Werner. Don't be afraid, little girl. Little girl, I see you are pretty, and I think you must be a stranger here—and pretty strangers must be warned. Little girl, beware of that man! [*Pointing to the landlord*]

Landlord. Ah, what an unexpected pleasure! Mr. Paul Werner! Welcome to our house, welcome indeed! Still the same jolly, jovial, honest Werner! Beware of me indeed, my pretty dear! Ha, ha, ha!

Werner. Avoid him at every turn!

Landlord. Avoid me? Am I so dangerous?—Ha, ha, ha!—Listen to him, my dear! Isn't he a one!

Werner. Isn't it funny how people like him always treat it as a joke when anyone tells the truth?

Landlord. The truth! That's even funnier, isn't it, my dear? He is a comic! Me dangerous? Me? That might have been so twenty years ago. Yes, my pretty dear, I was a menace then; there's many a girl could tell you about that; but now . . .

Werner. There's no fool like an old fool.

Landlord. You've hit it. When we're old we're not dangerous any longer. You'll fare no better yourself, Mr. Werner!

Werner. Have done chattering, you fool!—Little girl, you will credit me with enough sense to know that I am not talking about that kind of danger. One devil has gone out of him, but the seven worse than the first have nipped in . . .

Landlord. Listen to him, listen! How he can twist things round!—Joke upon joke, and never repeats himself! Oh, he's a splendid chap, Mr. Paul Werner! [*Whispering in Francisca's ear.*] Well off too, and still single. He has a nice freehold property about ten miles away. He made a bit out of the war!—and he used to be Sergeant-Major under our Major! He's a good friend of our Major's, a good friend indeed, that would lay down his life for him! . . .

Werner. Yes, and you're a nice friend of my Major's! A nice friend indeed. The Major ought to have his blood!

Landlord. What's that you say?—No, Mr. Werner, that's not a good joke. Me, no friend of the Major? I don't understand that one.

Werner. Just has been telling me a fine story.

Landlord. Just? I thought as much, I thought that was Just talking. Just is a nasty, mean-minded man. But look at this pretty child here; she can speak and bear witness whether I am a friend of the Major's, and whether I have been of service to him. And why shouldn't I be his friend? Hasn't he done a lot of service? It's true he has been unlucky enough to be discharged, but what of it? The King can't know about everybody's service: and if he did, he couldn't reward them all.

Werner. Your good angel must have prompted you to say that! But Just—well, granted there's not much to him: but whatever he is, Just is not a liar, and if it's true what he has been telling me . . .

Landlord. I don't want to hear about Just. As I was saying, this pretty child can speak for me. [*Whispering in her ear.*] You know, my dear, the ring! Tell Mr. Werner about it. That will show him the kind of man I am. And just so as not to let it seem as if you were doing it to please me, I won't be present. I won't be present, I'll go away; but you must tell me again, Mr. Werner, you must tell me some other time whether Just isn't a nasty slanderer. [*Exit.*]

SCENE V

Werner. Do you know my Major, little girl?

Francisca. Major von Tellheim? Indeed I know him, and a fine man he is.

Werner. Isn't he a fine man? I suppose you wish him well?

Francisca. From the bottom of my heart.

Werner. Truly? Look here, little girl. I now see you are twice as pretty as I thought. But what are the services that mine host says he has done for our Major?

Francisca. I've no idea. It might be that he is writing up to his own credit the good things that, luckily, have come out of his dishonest goings-on.

Werner. So it's really true what Just has been telling me? [*Calling in to the wings after the landlord.*] Lucky for you you've gone! So he really did turn his luggage out? To play such a trick on a man like that because the blockhead believes he had no money left! Fancy the Major having no money!

Francisca. Oh, has the Major any money?

Werner. And to spare! He doesn't know how much he has. He doesn't know who owes him money. I am in debt to him myself, and I'm paying some of it now. Look here, little girl, in this purse [*pulling it out of his pocket*] are a hundred gold lous, and in this little roll [*pulling roll out of another pocket*] a hundred ducats. All his money.

Francisca. Really? Then why is he pawning things? He did pawn a ring. . . .

Werner. Pawned it! Don't you believe it! Perhaps he wanted to get rid of the rubbish.

Francisca. It isn't rubbish! It's a very valuable ring, and besides it has a sentimental value.

Werner. That explains it—sentimental value. Oh, yes, that sort of thing often reminds you of something you don't want to be reminded of. So you get it out of your sight.

Francisca. What do you mean?

Werner. Funny things happen to soldiers when they're billeted for the winter. They have nothing to do, so they set to, and out of boredom they strike up acquaintances which they only mean to last for the winter, and which the good souls with whom they get acquainted intend to last for a lifetime. And before you can say Jack Robinson a ring appears on your finger, and you don't know yourself how it gets there. Often enough you'd let the finger itself go, just to be rid of it.

Francisca. And might something like that have happened to the Major?

Werner. Certainly it might. Especially in Saxony. If he had ten fingers on each hand he'd have got all twenty covered with rings.

Francisca. [*Aside.*] That sounds rather strange. It's worth looking into. . . . Farmer Werner—or should I say Sergeant-Major? . . .

Werner. Little girl, if it's all the same to you, I prefer Sergeant-Major.

Francisca. Well then, Sergeant-Major, I have a note here from the Major to her ladyship. I'm just going to take it in, and I'll be back in a minute. Will you be so kind as to wait for me? I should very much like to have a little chat with you.

Werner. Do you like chatting, little girl? Well, I'm willing: go on, I like chatting too; I'll wait for you.

Francisca. Oh, yes, please do wait. [*Exit*]

SCENE VI

Werner. Quite a nice little girl! But I shouldn't have promised her to wait. The most important thing is to look up the Major. So he's pawning things rather than take my money. That's just like him. I have an idea. When I was in town yesterday I called on Captain Marloff's widow. The poor woman was sick in bed and bemoaning that her husband owed the Major four hundred dollars that she didn't know how to pay him. To-day I was going to see her again to tell her that if I could get the money paid down on my farm I could lend her five hundred dollars—for I suppose I had better have something put away in case the Persian business doesn't come off. But she was up and away, and I'm certain she can't have paid the Major. Yes, that's how I'll do it, and the sooner the better. The little girl mustn't take it unkindly of me, but I can't stay. [*He turns to go, absorbed in thought, and almost runs into the Major, who enters from the opposite direction*]

SCENE VII

von Tellheim. Hallo, Werner! In a brown study?

Werner. Why, it is you, sir! I was just coming to see you in your new quarters.

von Tellheim. And have a good curse about the landlord of the old ones? But I'd rather you didn't.

Werner. I'd have done that as well. But actually I intended to thank you for being so kind as to take care of my hundred gold louis. Just has given them back to me, though I must say I'd be glad if you'd keep them a bit longer. However, you're moving to new quarters that neither you nor I know anything about. Who knows what they're like? You might be robbed there and have to pay me back notwithstanding. So I can't ask you to do it.

von Tellheim. [*Smiling*] Since when have you come to be so cautious, Werner?

Werner. Oh, one learns as time goes on. You can't be too careful with money nowadays. Then I had another message for you, sir, from Captain Marloff's widow; I've just left her. You remember her husband owed you four hundred dollars? She sends you a hundred ducats on account. She will send the rest next week. Probably I'm the reason why she didn't send the lot. She owed me one dollar eighty, and because she thought I'd come to claim it—which was more or less true—she gave it me out of the roll she'd just made up for you. You'll feel the need of your hundred dollars a week or so before I miss my few groschen. Here you are, sir. [*Handing him the roll of money.*]

von Tellheim. Werner!

Werner. Why are you staring at me like that, sir? Take it, sir.

von Tellheim. Werner!

Werner. What's the matter, sir? Why are you angry?

von Tellheim [*Bitterly, striking his forehead and stamping his foot*] Because the four hundred . . . aren't complete.

Werner. Now, now, sir, didn't you understand me?

von Tellheim. I understood you all too well! Why must it be that the best of mankind torture me most to-day?

Werner. What's that you say?

von Tellheim. Only half of it applies to you. Leave me, Werner! [*Pushing aside the hand with which Werner is pressing the money on him*]

Werner. Not till I have got rid of this.

von Tellheim. Werner, what if I told you that Captain Marloff's widow was here first thing this morning?

Werner. Was she?

von Tellheim. And that she doesn't owe me anything?

Werner. Really?

von Tellheim. That she has paid me every penny? What would you say?

Werner. [*After a moment's thought.*] I'd say I had lied to you, and that lying is a hell of a business if you get found out.

von Tellheim. Aren't you ashamed?

Werner. And what about the man that forced me to lie like that? Oughtn't he to be ashamed too? Look here, sir. If I was to say that your behaviour didn't annoy me, I'd be lying again, and I don't want to tell any more lies. . . .

von Tellheim. Don't be annoyed, Werner. I know how kind and how fond of me you are. But I don't need your money.

Werner. Don't need it! You'd rather pawn and sell things and get yourself talked about?

von Tellheim. I don't care who knows that I've no money left. It is not right to seem richer than one really is.

Werner. But why seem poorer? We've all got something as long as our friends have.

von Tellheim. It is not right for me to be your debtor.

Werner. Not right? That scorching day when the sun and the enemy together were making it hot for us, your groom lost himself and your canteen too. And you came to me and said, "Got a drink, Sergeant-Major?" When I handed you my water-bottle, you took it and drank, didn't you? Was that right? Strike me dead if a swig of dirty water wasn't worth more than all that muck [*pointing to the purse of Louis-d'or and offering it together with the roll*]. Take it, my dear Major! Think to yourself it's just water. God made them both for everybody.

von Tellheim. You torture me. You heard me say I'll not be your debtor.

Werner. First you say it isn't right, and now you say you don't want to. Well, that's another thing. [*Rather angrily.*] You don't want to be my debtor? What if you are that already, sir? Or do you owe nothing to the man that once parried a blow that would have split your skull, and another time cut off the arm of a man that would have shot you through the heart? . . . What more can you owe a man than that? Or is my neck worth less than my purse? . . . That may be a gentlemanly way of thinking, but by God it's a silly one.

von Tellheim. How can you say that, Werner? We are alone, so I can say it, but if any one else were to hear me, he'd call me a windbag. I'm glad to think you saved my life twice.

But, old friend, wouldn't I have done the same for you, given the chance? Eh?

Werner. Only lack of the chance! Who doubts that, sir? Haven't I seen you again and again risk your life for the sake of the lowest trooper, when he was hard-pressed?

von Tellheim. There you are!

Werner. But . . .

von Tellheim. Why can't you understand me? I say it isn't right that you should lend me money; I do not want to be your debtor. That's to say, in the circumstances in which I am now.

Werner. Oh, I see! You want to put it off for better times. You want to borrow off me some other time when you don't need any money, when you have some yourself and I have none, maybe.

von Tellheim. It is wrong to borrow when one sees no way of paying back.

Werner. A man like you can't be down on his luck all the time.

von Tellheim. A lot you know about the world! Least of all ought one to borrow from a man that needs his money himself.

Werner. Such as me? What do I want with money? Anyone that needs a sergeant-major will pay me a living wage.

von Tellheim. You need to be more than a sergeant-major to get along in a career where even the best men get left behind without money.

Werner. More than a sergeant-major? I'm a good sergeant-major, and I might very likely be a bad captain and a worse general. I wouldn't be the first.

von Tellheim. Don't force me to think ill of you, Werner. I didn't like what Just told me about you. You've sold your farm and you're on the tramp again. Don't make me think that it's not so much the profession you love as the wild, unruly life that goes with it, more's the pity. A man should soldier for his country or for love of the cause that's being fought for. A man that serves here to-day and there to-morrow is no better than a journeyman butcher.

Werner. Well, all right, sir, I'll take your advice. You know better what's right. I'll abide by your choice. But, my dear Major, please take this money off me. In a day or two your claim will be settled, and then you'll have bushels of money. Then you can pay me back with interest. I'm only doing it on account of the interest.

von Tellheim Enough of that, now.

Werner. By God, I tell you it's only on account of the interest !
How often I've said to myself, What will become of you in your old age? What if you get carved up? What if you have no money left, and have to beg for your living? And then again I think to myself, No, you won't have to beg; you'll go to Major von Tellheim and he'll share his last penny with you; he'll stuff you with grub till your dying day; you'll die decent with the Major.

von Tellheim. [*Taking his hand.*] And you don't think so still?

Werner. No, I don't think so now. A man that won't take anything from me when he needs it and I have it won't give me anything when I need it and he has it. All right ! [*Going*]

von Tellheim. Man, you'll drive me mad ! Where are you going? [*Holding him back.*] If I promise you now, on my honour, that I still have money? If I promise you on my honour to tell you when it is all gone that you shall be the first and only one to lend me money . . . will that satisfy you?

Werner. I suppose it must. Give me your hand on that, sir.

von Tellheim. There you are, Paul. And that's enough of that.
I came here to speak to a certain lady's maid. . . .

SCENE VIII

Enter Francisca from M. von B.'s room

Francisca. [*Entering.*] Still here, Sergeant-Major? [*Seeing v. T.*]
You too, sir? I'll be at your service in a moment.

[*Exit quickly to M. von B.'s room.*]

SCENE IX

von Tellheim. That was the girl. But I see you know her, Werner?

Werner. Yes, I know that little girl. . . .

von Tellheim. All the same, if I remember rightly, you weren't with us when I was billeted in Thuringia that winter?

Werner. No, I was seeing after some equipment in Leipzig.

von Tellheim. Then how do you come to know her?

Werner. Well, our acquaintance is very recent. Not a day old.
But all the warmer for that.

von Tellheim. Have you seen her young mistress too? I suppose you have.

Werner. Is she with a young lady? She told me you knew her mistress.

von Tellheim. Didn't I tell you? I met her in Thuringia.

Werner. Young, is she?

von Tellheim. Yes.

Werner. Pretty?

von Tellheim. Beautiful.

Werner. Rich?

von Tellheim. Very rich.

Werner. Is the mistress as nice as the maid? That would be absolutely splendid!

von Tellheim. What did you say?

SCENE X

Enter Francisca, carrying letter

Francisca. Major Tellheim . . .

von Tellheim. My dear Francisca, I haven't had a chance of welcoming you here yet.

Francisca. Well, I dare say you've done it in your mind already. I know you think well of me. So do I of you. But it's not kind to frighten people who wish you well.

Werner. [*Aside.*] Ah, now I see! It really is so!

von Tellheim. That's my fate, Francisca! Have you given her the letter?

Francisca. Yes, and here's . . . [*Handing over letter.*]

von Tellheim. Her answer?

Francisca. No, your own letter back again.

von Tellheim. Won't she read it?

Francisca. She would like to, but we can't read handwriting very well.

von Tellheim. Little fibber!

Francisca. And we don't think writing letters was meant for people that can talk to each other face to face if they want to.

von Tellheim. What a pretext! She must read it! It contains my apology . . . all the reasons and causes . . .

Francisca. My lady wants to hear them from yourself, not read them.

von Tellheim. Hear them from me? So that I shall be driven desperate by every word, every gesture of hers, so that I shall feel the whole weight of my loss at every glance?

Francisca. You'll get no pity! Take this. [*Giving letter.*] She

expects you at three o'clock. She intends to drive round and have a look at the town, and she wants you to go with her.

von Tellheim. Go with her?

Francisca. And what will you give me to let the pair of you go alone? I'll stay at home.

von Tellheim. Alone?

Francisca. Yes, in a nice closed carriage.

von Tellheim. Impossible!

Francisca. Oh, yes. In the carriage Major von Tellheim will have to face the music. He can't escape us there. That's just the reason. In short, sir, you are to come on the stroke of three. And now, you wanted to talk to me alone. What have you got to say? Oh, I see, we are not alone [*looking at Werner*]

von Tellheim. Oh, yes, Francisca, we are as good as alone. But since her ladyship has not yet read the letter, I cannot as yet say anything to you.

Francisca. So this is what you call as good as alone? You have no secrets from the Sergeant-Major?

von Tellheim. None at all.

Francisca. All the same, I think you should have.

von Tellheim. Why so?

Werner. Why, little girl?

Francisca. Especially secrets of a certain kind. All twenty of them, Mr. Sergeant-Major? [*Holding up both hands with outspread fingers*]

Werner. Ssh! Little girl, little girl!

von Tellheim. What is all this about?

Francisca. Before you can say Jack Robinson, eh, Sergeant-Major? [*Making as if to slip a ring on a finger.*]

von Tellheim. What is the matter with you two?

Werner. Little girl, little girl, surely you can take a joke?

von Tellheim. Werner, have you forgotten what I have so often told you, about never joking with women on certain subjects?

Werner. God bless my soul, I must have done. Little girl, I beg of you . . .

Francisca. Well, seeing it was a joke, I will forgive you this time.

von Tellheim. If I really must come, Francisca, contrive for her ladyship to read my letter beforehand! That will save me the torture of thinking and saying over again things that I would so much rather forget. Here, give her this! [*Turning the letter over in his hand and offering it to F., when he notices that it has been opened.*] Am I mistaken? Why, look, Francisca, the letter has been opened!

Francisca. Maybe. [*Looking at it.*] Why, yes, it has been opened! Who can have done that? But really and truly, sir, we didn't read it. We don't wish to read it either, for the writer is coming himself. Do come; but I'll tell you what, sir. Don't come as you are in those great boots, and your hair not dressed, though you can be excused because you weren't expecting us. But come in shoes, and have your hair dressed. As you are now you look much too soldierly and Prussian for my taste.

von Tellheim. Thank you, *Francisca*.

Francisca. You look as if you had slept out of doors last night.

von Tellheim. That's not a bad guess.

Francisca. We are going to dress now, and then dine. We would like to ask you to dinner, but your presence might hinder our eating. And you see we are not so much in love that we've lost our appetites.

von Tellheim. I must go. *Francisca*, prepare her a little beforehand, so that I don't seem so contemptible in her eyes or my own. Come and dine with me, *Werner*.

Werner. What, at the ordinary here? I couldn't fancy it.

von Tellheim. No, up in my rooms.

Werner. In that case I'll be with you directly. After I've had a word with this little girl.

von Tellheim. A very good idea!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE XI

Francisca. Well, Sergeant-Major? . . .

Werner. When I come back, little girl, shall I smarten up a bit too?

Francisca. Come just as you like, Sergeant-Major. My eyes will have nothing against you. But my ears will have to be all the more on their guard. Twenty fingers all over rings indeed! I'm surprised at you.

Werner. No, little girl, I was just going to tell you about that; the joke slipped out somehow. There's nothing to it. There's quite enough bother over *one* ring. And many's the score of times I've heard the Major say that only a worthless kind of soldier would lead a girl on. I think so too, little girl. You can depend on that. I must hurry up and go after him. Good-bye for now, little girl!

[*Exit.*]

Francisca. Good-bye, Sergeant-Major. . . . I believe I like that man!

[*As she is about to leave the room, enter M. v. B.*]

SCENE XII

Minna Has the Major gone already? Francisca, I believe I'm calm enough by now to have let him stay.

Francisca. And I'll make you calmer still

Minna Good. His letter, oh, his letter! Every line bespoke the noble, honourable man. His every refusal to have me made his love more precious to me. He must have realized that we had read the letter. Well, let him, if only he comes! He *is* coming, isn't he? Only it seems to me, Francisca, that there is a little too much pride in his attitude. For not to want to owe one's happiness even to one's sweetheart, *is* pride, unpardonable pride. If he rubs that in too much, Francisca . . .

Francisca. Then you'll give him up?

Minna. Oh, don't say that! Aren't you sorry for him all over again? No, foolish Francisca, no one gives a man up just on account of *one* fault. No: but I have thought of a way to plague him a little for his pride by means of a pride to match.

Francisca. Well, you must be quite calm again, my lady, if you're already thinking of more stratagems.

Minna. Indeed, I am. Come along; you will have your part to play too. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV—SCENE I

Minna's Room

[*Minna and Francisca discovered rising from table. Minna is elaborately and richly but tastefully dressed. A servant clears the table.*]

Francisca. Surely, my lady, you have not had enough?

Minna. Do you think not, Francisca? Perhaps I wasn't hungry when I sat down.

Francisca We agreed not to talk of him during the meal. But we ought to have determined not to think of him either!

Minna. Really, I thought of nothing but him the whole time.

Francisca. I noticed that. I began all kinds of subjects, and you gave me the wrong answers every time. [*Another servant brings coffee*] Here comes something better suited to the megrims. Dear old melancholy coffee!

Minna. Melancholy? Not I. I'm only thinking over the lesson

I mean to teach him. Do you understand your part, Francisca?

Francisca. Oh yes. But I think it would be better if he spared us the trouble.

Minna. This will show you that I know him like the palm of my hand. The very man who refuses me and all my fortune will stand up to the world for me as soon as he hears I'm unlucky and forlorn.

Francisca. [*Very gravely.*] Yes, such a situation would flatter the most delicate kind of self-love.

Minna. Oh, you moralist! Look at her—first she accuses me of levity and now of vanity! Let me go my own way, Francisca dear. You can do what you like with your Sergeant-Major.

Francisca. My Sergeant-Major?

Minna. Yes, it's true, however you deny it. Although I've not seen him yet, every word you've said to me about him foretells a husband for you.

SCENE II

Enter Riccaut de la Marlinière

Riccaut. [*Speaking without.*] *Est-il permis, Monsieur le Major?*

Francisca. What's this? Does somebody want us? [*Going to the door*]

Riccaut. *Parbleu* I am mistook. *Mais non*, I am unmistook . . .
C'est sa chambre.

Francisca. My lady, I believe the gentleman thinks Major von Tellheim still lives here.

Riccaut. But yes! *Le Major de Tellheim; justement, ma belle enfant, c'est lui que je cherche. Ou est-il?*

Francisca. He does not live here any longer.

Riccaut. *Comment?* Twenty-four hours ago he stay here. And now no more. Where does he stay?

Minna. [*Coming forward.*] Sir . . .

Riccaut. Ah, madame, mademoiselle, excuse, please. . . .

Minna. A pardonable mistake, sir, and a very natural surprise.

The Major has been good enough to give up his room to me, as I was a stranger and unable to find lodging elsewhere.

Riccaut. Ah, *voilà de ses politesses!* *C'est un homme très galant que ce Major.*

Minna. I am ashamed to say I cannot tell you where he has moved since.

Riccaut. Your ladyship not know? *C'est dommage : j'en suis fâché.*

Minna. I really ought to have found out about that; for of course his friends will keep calling for him here.

Riccaut. I am of his best friends, *mademoiselle*. . .

Minna. Francisca, do you know where he is?

Francisca. No, my lady.

Riccaut. It is most necessary that I speak with him. I bring him news that will make him most glad.

Minna. I am all the more sorry I cannot direct you. Yet I hope to see him myself soon. Does it matter from whom he hears this good news? If not, I should be glad to. . . .

Riccaut. I understand . . . *Mademoiselle parle français ? Mais sans doute , telle que je la vois ! La demande était bien impolie ; vous me pardonnerez, mademoiselle. . . .*

Minna. Sir . . .

Riccaut. No? You speak not French, *mademoiselle*?

Minna. Sir, in France I would do my best to speak it. But why here? I can see that you understand me, sir. And I shall certainly be able to understand you. So speak as you please.

Riccaut. Good! I too can explain myself in German. *Sachez donc, mademoiselle.* You must know that I come from to dine at the Minister of—of—how does he call himself, that Minister outside? In the long street by the so large place?

Minna. I do not know anyone here yet.

Riccaut. Well, the Minister of the War *département*. I have dine with him, as I do in general. One has spoken of the Major de Tellheim. *Et le ministre m'a dit en confiance, car son Excellence est de mes amis, et il n'y a pas de mystères entre nous.* His Excellency, I say, has confided in me that the cause of our Major is approaching to an end, and a happy end. He has made a report to the King, and the King has decided *tout-à-fait en faveur du Major*. *Monsieur, m'a dit son Excellence, vous comprenez bien que tout dépend de la manière dont on fait envisager les choses au roi, et vous me connaissez. Cel fait un très joli garçon que ce Tellheim, et ne sais-je pas que vous l'aimez ? Les amis de mes amis sont aussi les miens. Il coûte un peu cher au roi ce Tellheim, mais est-ce que' on sert les rois pour rien ? Il faut s'entr'aider en ce monde ; et quand il s'agit de pertes, que ce soit le roi qui en fasse, et non pas un honnête homme de nous autres. Voilà le principe dont je ne me dépars jamais.* What does your ladyship say to that? A good man, is it not? *Ah, que son Excellence a le cœur bien placé.* Au reste, he tells me that if

the Major has not already received *une lettre de la main*—a royal patent—he will without doubt receive one today.

Minna. Indeed, sir, this news will be most welcome to Major von Tellheim. I only wish I might tell him the name of the friend who has taken such an interest in his fortunes. . . .

Riccaut My name? *Vous voyez en moi*, your ladyship, *le Chevalier Riccaut de la Marlinière, Siegneur de Pret-au-Val, de la Branche de Prems-d'Or.* *Mademoiselle* marvels to hear that I am of a so great family? *Elle est véritablement du sang royal. Il faut le dire ; je suis sans doute le cadet le plus aventureux que la maison n'a jamais eu.* I am since my eleventh year a soldier. An affair of honour caused me to flee. Since then I have served His Holiness the Pope, the Republic of San Marino, the crown of Poland and the States-General, until finally I was called here. Ah, *mademoiselle, que je voudrais n'avoir jamais vu ce pays-là !* Had I not disengaged myself from the service of the States-General, I should have become at least colonel. But to remain here ever and always a captain, and now only a retired captain . . .

Minna. That is very bad luck.

Riccaut. *Oui, mademoiselle, me voilà réformé et par là mis sur le pavé !*

Minna. I am so very sorry.

Riccaut *Vous êtes bien bonne, mademoiselle.* No, they do not recognize the merit here. To discharge a man like me ! And a man too that has ruined himself in their service ! I have lost more than twenty thousand livres since I engaged myself. And what have I now? *Tranchons le mot, je n'ai pas le sou, et me voilà exactement vis-à-vis du rien.*

Minna. This is very sad indeed !

Riccaut. *Vous êtes bien bonne, mademoiselle.* But as one says, each misfortune brings with it its brothers ; *qu'un malheur ne vient jamais seul.* So it is with me. What can a gentleman of my origins have to fall back on but the cards? Now always I have won with good fortune so long as I do not have need of the good fortune. Now that I do need her, *mademoiselle, je joue avec un guignon qui surpasse toute croyance.* Since fifteen days is not one day gone by that I have not gone broke. And yesterday three times running. *Je sais bien qu'il y avait quelquechose de plus que le jeu. Car parmi mes pontes se trouvaient certaines dames.* I will not say more. One must be gallant towards the ladies. They have invited me to take my revenge today ; but you understand, *mademoiselle.*

First one must have the means to live before having the means to gamble.

Minna. I hope, sir, you are not . . .

Riccaut. *Vous êtes bien bonne, mademoiselle.*

Minna. [*Taking Francisca aside*] Francisca, I am truly sorry for him. Do you think he would take it ill of me if I offered him help?

Francisca. He doesn't look to me as if he would.

Minna. Very well, then. I hear, sir, that you play and hold the bank at places where something is to be won. I must confess that I likewise am very fond of gaming . . .

Riccaut. *Tant mieux, mademoiselle, tant mieux. Tous les gens d'esprit aiment le jeu à la fureur.*

Minna. I am very fond of winning, too, and I like to stake my money through a man who—knows how to gamble. Would you consider taking me into partnership? Giving me a share in your bank?

Riccaut. *Comment, mademoiselle, vous voulez être de moitié avec moi? De tout mon cœur.*

Minna. Only for a trifle at first. [*Taking money out of the strong-box.*]

Riccaut. *Ah, mademoiselle, que vous êtes charmante!*

Minna. Here are my last winnings . . . only ten pistoles. Indeed, I should be ashamed to have so little. . . .

Riccaut. *Donnez toujours, mademoiselle, donnez.* [*Taking money.*]

Minna. Doubtless, sir, your bank is pretty large?

Riccaut. Yes, very large. Ten pistole? Your interest, your ladyship, shall be for one-third of the profits. True, I ought to get a little more to offer you one-third. But with a fair lady one should not be so exact. I felicitate myself of having come into contact with your ladyship through this affair, *et de ce moment je recommence à bien augurer de ma fortune.*

Minna. But I cannot be present at the tables with you.

Riccaut. What necessity is there for your ladyship? We other gamblers are honest among ourselves.

Minna. If we are lucky, sir, you will bring me my share soon enough. But if not . . .

Riccaut. Then I will come to fetch reinforcements, is it not?

Minna. Reinforcements are likely to give out in the long run. So defend our money stoutly, sir.

Riccaut. For what do you take me, *mademoiselle*? For a simpleton? For a booby?

Minna. Forgive my . . .

Riccaut. *Je suis des bons, mademoiselle. Savez-vous ce que cela veut dire ?*

Minna. But surely . . .

Riccaut. *Je sais monter un coup. . . .*

Minna. [*Amazed.*] Do you mean to say . . .

Riccaut. *Je file la carte avec une adresse. . . .*

Minna. No, no !

Riccaut. *Je fais sauter la coupe avec une dextérité . . .*

Minna. But I do hope you'll do nothing of the kind, sir !

Riccaut. Why not, *mademoiselle*, why not? *Donnez-moi un pigeonneau a plumer, et . . .*

Minna You play false? You cheat?

Riccaut. *Comment, mademoiselle, vous appelez cela cheat ? Corriger la fortune, l'enchaîner sous ses doigts, être sur de son fait, the Germans call that to cheat? Cheat? What a poor language ! What a dull language !*

Minna. No, no, sir, if you think that . . .

Riccaut. *Laissez-moi faire, mademoiselle, and please to be calm ! What makes it to you how I play? Bien, either you see me to-morrow with hundred pistole, or never no more . . . Votre très humble, mademoiselle, votre très humble. [Exit in haste.]*

Minna. [*Looking after him with astonishment and disgust*] May it be the latter, sir ; may it be the latter !

SCENE III

Francisca. [*Bitterly*] And now may I speak? A fine business ! A fine business !

Minna. Laugh away ! I deserve it. [*After a pause, more composedly.*] No, don't laugh, *Francisca*, I don't deserve it.

Francisca. Splendid. You have done a kind action ! Put a down-and-out trickster on his feet again.

Minna. My help was meant for an unfortunate man.

Francisca. And the best of it is that the fellow takes you for one of his own sort. Oh, I must go after him and take the money from him. [*Going.*]

Minna. *Francisca*, don't let the coffee go stone cold. Pour some out.

Francisca. He must give it you back. I'll tell him you have thought better of it. You don't want to go in with him. Ten pistoles ! You could tell, my lady, from his way of talking that he is just a beggar [*Minna pours out coffee for herself.*]

Who'd give all that to a beggar? And to try to spare him the shame of having begged it, too! Those that will misjudge beggars out of the kindness of their hearts, will find the beggar misjudging them. Well, it serves your ladyship right if he uses your gift for I don't know what. [*Minna hands her a cup of coffee*] Do you want to bring my blood to the boil again? I want no coffee. [*Minna puts the cup aside.*] Parbleu, they do not recognize the merit here [*Mimicking the Frenchman.*] No, they don't, if they let tricksters like that run about unhung.

Minna. [*Coldly and deliberately, as she drinks.*] My dear, you get on so well with good people. But when will you learn how to put up with bad ones? For they are people too. And often not nearly so bad as they seem. One should search for their good side. I imagine this Frenchman is no more than concerted. Out of sheer conceit he makes himself out to be a sharper. He doesn't want to seem under an obligation to me. He doesn't want to thank me. Perhaps he'll go away now and pay his little debts, and live quietly and thriftily on the rest as long as it lasts, without a thought of gambling. If that is so, Francisca dear, he may come and fetch reinforcements as soon as he likes. [*Giving her the cup*] There, put it away! But ought not Tellheim to be here by now?

Francisca. No, my lady, I can't do either—look for the good side of a bad man or the bad side of a good man.

Minna. You think he will be sure to come?

Francisca. I wish he'd stay away! You see a little pride in him, the best of men, and just for that you mean to tease him so cruelly?

Minna. Harping on that again, Francisca? That's enough. I do mean to, and that's all. Don't dare to try to spoil this for me, or not say and do as we have agreed. We will arrange that you are left alone with him, and then—— That must be he now!

SCENE IV

Enter Paul Werner, marching as if on parade.

Francisca. No, it's only his dear Sergeant-Major.

Minna. Dear Sergeant-Major! Dear to whom?

Francisca. Please don't bewilder the man, my lady. At your service, Sergeant-Major. What news have you for us?

Werner. [*Going up to Minna without noticing Francisca.*] Regi-

mental Sergeant-Major Werner begs to report on behalf of Major von Tellheim that he sends his most respectful compliments to her ladyship and that he will soon be present.

Minna Where is he now?

Werner Begging your ladyship's pardon, we left billets at three o'clock or a little before; but the Paymaster intercepted us on the way: and as there is no end to the conversation of those gentlemen, the Major signalled to me to report the incident to your ladyship.

Minna. Thank you, Sergeant-Major. I only hope the Paymaster has some good news for the Major.

Werner It's seldom enough those gentlemen have such news for the officers. Has your ladyship any orders? [*Preparing to go.*]

Francisca. Why go so soon, Sergeant-Major? Hadn't we something to talk about?

Werner. [*In an earnest whisper.*] Not here, little girl It's against all respect and discipline. . . . My lady . . .

Minna. I thank you for your trouble, Sergeant-Major. I am glad to have made your acquaintance. Francisca has spoken to me very well of you. [*Werner bows stiffly and exit.*]

SCENE V

Minna. So that's your Sergeant-Major, Francisca?

Francisca. You are so teasing about him I can't haggle about that "your" again. Yes, my lady, that's "my" Sergeant-Major. No doubt you find him a bit stiff and wooden. I thought so too just now. But I know he thought he had to be on parade in front of your ladyship. And when soldiers are on parade, to be sure they look more like marionettes than men. But you should see him and hear him talk when he is off duty.

Minna. Yes, I suppose I should.

Francisca. He'll be in the parlour still. Mayn't I go and have a little chat with him?

Minna. I don't like denying you that pleasure, but you must stay here, Francisca. You must be present at our interview! I have a new idea. [*Takes ring from her finger.*] Here, take this ring, keep it, and give me the Major's instead.

Francisca. Why?

Minna. [*While Francisca is getting the other ring.*] I hardly know myself. But I think I foresee an occasion when I might need it. There's someone knocking. Quick, give it to me. It's he! [*Putting on ring.*]

SCENE VI

Enter von Tellheim, in the same coat, but otherwise dressed as Francisca advised.

von Tellheim. Madam, you will excuse my lateness . . .

Minna. Oh, Major, let's not behave in such a military manner to one another! The main thing is that you are here. And the anticipation of pleasure is a pleasure in itself. Now [*smiling into his face*], dear Tellheim, have we not been behaving like children?

von Tellheim. Yes, madam, like children who struggle when they ought meekly to submit.

Minna. Let us go for a drive round the town, my dear Major, and then go to meet my uncle.

von Tellheim. Your uncle?

Minna. There, you see, we haven't yet had time to tell one another the most important things! Yes, he is arriving some time to-day. It was only because of an accident that I got here a day before him.

von Tellheim. Has Count von Bruchsall returned then?

Minna. The war troubles made him flee to Italy, but the peace brings him back. Do not worry, Tellheim. Even though we feared at one time the strongest opposition to our union on his part . . .

von Tellheim. To our union?

Minna. He is friendly to you. Too many people have spoken well of you to him for him to be otherwise. He is most anxious to come face to face with the man whom his sole heiress has chosen. He is coming as my uncle, my guardian, my father, to give you my hand.

von Tellheim. Oh, madam, why did you not read my letter? Why did you refuse to read it?

Minna. Your letter? Oh yes, I remember you sent me one. What happened to the letter, Francisca? Did we read it or not? What did you write to me about, my dear Tellheim?

von Tellheim. Nothing but what my honour dictated.

Minna. And that would be not to jilt an honest girl who loves you. I'm sure that's what honour would say! I really ought to have read the letter. But of course I am hearing now what I did not read.

von Tellheim. Yes, you shall hear it. . . .

Minna. No, I do not need to hear it. It's self-evident. Could you be capable of so vile an act as to give me up now? Do you realize that I should be laughed at for the rest of my life? My countrywomen would point their fingers at me. "There she is," they would say. "That's the Fraulein von Barnhelm who thought she could get that fine man, Major von Tellheim, just because she was rich, as if good men were to be had for money!" That's what they would say because they are all jealous of me. They can't deny that I am rich. But they don't want to admit that, apart from that, I am a nice enough girl and deserve a good husband. Isn't that true, Tellheim?

von Tellheim. Yes, yes, madam, it would be just like your countrywomen to envy you bitterly your half-pay officer, sullied in his honour, a cripple, a beggar.

Minna. So that is what you claim to be? I seem to have heard something like that already this morning. The good and bad are rather mixed, Major, if we look a little closer at each? You are discharged? I was told so. But I thought your regiment had only been incorporated with another. How is it that a man with a record of service like yours was not retained?

von Tellheim. It was just the way of it. Those in high places have convinced themselves that no soldier does much for their sake and very little out of a sense of duty, but everything for his own honour. What in their own estimation can they owe him then? The peace has rendered many, like myself, superfluous to them—and in the long run no one is indispensable.

Minna. You speak as a man must who in his turn finds the great superfluous. And never more so than now. I'm grateful to these great ones for having waived their claims to a man whom I would have been very loath to share with them. You're under my command now, Tellheim, and you need no other master. I could not in my happiest dreams have thought to find you discharged! But that was not the only thing. What else were you besides? Crippled, you said? Well [*looking him up and down*], the cripple is pretty straight and sturdy and seems fairly sound and healthy. Dear Tellheim, if you were to go begging on the strength of having lost the use of your arm, I prophesy that very few doors would open to you, except those of kind-hearted girls like myself.

von Tellheim. Now I hear only a wilful girl talking, my dear Minna.

Minna. And in your reproach I hear only the words "dear Minna". I won't be wilful any more. For I remember that you are a little crippled. You got a slight bullet wound in the right arm. But, all things considered, that is no bad thing. You won't be able to beat me!

von Tellheim. Madam!

Minna. You're going to say that you'll be so much the more exposed to violence from me. Now, now, dear Tellheim, I hope you won't let it come to that point.

von Tellheim. You are pleased to laugh, madam. I regret I am not able to laugh with you.

Minna. Why not? What have you against laughing? Can't one be in earnest and laugh too? Laughter, dear Major, keeps us saner than anger. The proof is before you. Your laughing lover assesses your circumstances far more justly than you do yourself. Because you have been discharged you describe yourself as sullied in honour. Because you have been shot in the arm you see yourself a cripple. Is that fair? Is there no exaggeration? Is it my fault if all exaggerations are so open to ridicule? I wager if I were to take your term "beggar" it too would prove to have little sting in it. You may have lost your kit two or three times. Your credit with this or that banker may have disappeared like that of other people. You may have lost all hope of recovering loans which you have made here and there on service. But does that make you a beggar? Even if you had nothing left but what my uncle is bringing you . . .

von Tellheim. Your uncle, madam, is bringing me nothing.

Minna. Nothing but twenty thousand pistoles that you were generous enough to lend to our Saxon Estates.

von Tellheim. If only you had read my letter, madam!

Minna. Well, then, I *have* read it! But what you wrote on that subject is indeed a mystery to me. It is impossible that anyone should construe your noble action as a crime. Explain it to me, dear Major Tellheim.

von Tellheim. You will remember, madam, that I had orders to collect contributions from your local authorities with the utmost rigour, and in cash. I wanted to spare myself that rigour, and so I advanced the balance myself.

Minna. Of course I remember. I would have loved you for that deed, if for nothing else.

von Tellheim. The Estates gave me their note of hand, which I was to cash together with all debts to be acknowledged at the ratification of the peace. The note was declared valid, but my title to it was disputed, and they sneered at me when I told them I had advanced cash down. They called it a bribe, a bonus to me from the Estates for having been so ready to accept from them the least sum I had authority to settle for in case of emergency. So the note passed out of my hands, and when it is met, it is certainly not I who will be paid. It is in this matter, madam, that I feel my honour has been impugned, not on account of my discharge, for which I should have applied had it not been ordered. That makes you grave, madam? Why don't you laugh? Look, I'm laughing. Ha, ha!

Minna. Tellheim, I beg you to stop laughing! I implore you! It is the dreadful laughter of misanthropy. No, you are not the man to regret a good deed because it brings ill for you. And these consequences cannot last. Truth must come to light. The testimony of my uncle and of all the Estates . . .

von Tellheim. Oh, your uncle? Your Estates? Ha, ha, ha!

Minna. Your laughter is killing me, Tellheim. If you believe in goodness and Providence, Tellheim, do not laugh like that! I have never heard anyone curse more horribly than you laugh. Let us put it at its worst. If they persist in misjudging you here, no one will do so at home. No, we cannot and will not misjudge you, Tellheim. If our Estates have the least smattering of honour they will do as I think they must. But what am I saying? Why should that be necessary? Imagine, Tellheim, that you had lost twenty thousand pistoles in a night at the tables. The king was an unlucky card for you; the queen [*pointing to herself*] will be all the luckier. Providence, believe me, always holds the honourable man blameless, and often saves him beforehand. The very act that was eventually to lose you twenty thousand pistoles, gave me you. Had it not been for that action, I should never have desired to know you. You know I came uninvited to the first party where I could hope to meet you. I came only because of you. I came firmly resolved to love you . . . I loved you already . . . resolved to have you, even if you should turn out as black and ugly as the Moor of Venice. You are not as black or as ugly as that, and perhaps not so jealous. But, Tellheim, Tellheim, you still have much in common with him. Oh these fierce, inflexible men, with their eyes fixed immovably on the spectre of honour, who harden themselves against all

other feeling! Look, Tellheim, here, at me! [*Tellheim stares fixedly at one spot.*] What are you thinking about? You aren't listening to me?

von Tellheim. [*Absently.*] Oh yes! But tell me, madam, how did Othello come to be in the Venetian service? Had he no country of his own? Why did he hire his sword and his blood to a foreign State?

Minna. [*Frightened.*] Tellheim, where are you? It is time for us to stop. Come with me. [*Taking him by the hand*] Francisca, have the coach brought round.

von Tellheim. [*Wrenching himself free and following Francisca*] No, Francisca, I cannot have the honour of escorting her ladyship. Madam, let me keep my senses for to-day at least and give me leave to go. You are in a fair way to drive me mad. I am trying to control myself as well as I can. But while I am still in my right mind let me tell you, madam, what I have resolved to do, and what nothing in the world shall prevent my doing. Unless I throw a lucky number next time, unless I meet a complete reversal of fortune . . . unless . . .

Minna. I must interrupt you, Major. We should have told him at once, Francisca. Really, you never remind me about anything. This conversation would have gone quite another way, Tellheim, if I had begun it with the good news which the Chevalier de la Marlinière has just brought.

von Tellheim. The Chevalier de la Marlinière? Who is he?

Francisca. A good enough man, most likely, sir, but for . . .

Minna. Be silent, Francisca. Another discharged officer, I think he said from the Dutch service. . . .

von Tellheim. Ah, Lieutenant Riccaut!

Minna. He assured us he was a friend of yours.

von Tellheim. And I assure you I am none of his.

Minna. He said some Minister or other had told him that your case was about to reach a favourable solution. He said there must be a letter from the King on its way to you.

von Tellheim. How did Riccaut come to be talking to a Minister? But something must have happened about my case. For just now the Paymaster said that the King had quashed all the charges against me, and that I could recover my written parole not to leave this place until I was fully exonerated. But that is most likely all. They propose to let me off. But they are wrong; I won't be let off! I would rather stay here, devoured by the most grinding poverty under the eyes of my traducers . . .

Minna. Obstinate man !

von Tellheim. I need no pity. I want justice. My honour . . .

Minna. The honour of such a man as you . . .

von Tellheim. [*Heatedly*] No, madam, you may be a good judge of everything else, but not of that. Honour is not the voice of our conscience, not the testimony of others less upright . . .

Minna. No, no—I know. Honour is—honour.

von Tellheim. In short, madam—you do not let me finish. I was about to say that if they so disgracefully hold back my due, if the fullest satisfaction is not accorded to my honour, then, madam, I cannot be yours. For in the eyes of the world I should not be worthy of you. The Fraulein von Barnhelm deserves a husband without reproach. It is a worthless love that does not scruple to expose its object to contempt. It is a worthless man that does not think shame to owe his whole happiness to a woman whose blind tenderness . . .

Minna. You really mean that, Major? [*Suddenly turning her back on him.*] Francisca !

von Tellheim. Don't be so impetuous, madam. . . .

Minna. [*Aside to Francisca*] Now's the time, it seems to me.

What would you advise me to do, Francisca?

Francisca. Nothing : but I do think he is going too far.

von Tellheim. [*Interrupting them*] You are too hasty, madam . . .

Minna. [*Scornfully.*] I? Not in the least.

von Tellheim. If I loved you less, madam . . .

Minna. [*As before.*] Oh, of course, that would be my misfortune ! And be assured, sir, I do not desire your misfortune, either. One should love unselfishly. It is as well that I have not been franker ! Perhaps your pity would have granted me what your love has denied me [*Slowly drawing the ring from her finger.*]

von Tellheim. What is the meaning of this, madam?

Minna. No, neither of us must make the other either more or less happy. That is the way of true love ! I take your word for it, sir. And you are too full of honour to misjudge love.

von Tellheim. Are you jesting with me, madam?

Minna. Here, sir, take back this ring with which you pledged me your troth. [*Handing him ring*] What must be, must be. Let us pretend we never knew one another.

von Tellheim. What are you saying?

Minna. Does it astonish you? Take it, sir. You have not, I hope, been pretending?

von Tellheim. [*Taking the ring from her hand.*] My God, can Minna speak like this?

Minna. In *one* contingency you cannot be mine. I cannot be yours in *any*. Your unhappiness is probable, but mine is certain. Farewell! [*Going*]

von Tellheim. Where are you going, Minna dearest?

Minna. Sir, you insult me by using that intimate name now.

von Tellheim. What is the matter, madam? Where are you going?

Minna. Let me go, and hide my tears from you—traitor!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE VII

von Tellheim. Her tears? And I was leaving her thus! [*About to follow.*]

Francisca [*Holding him back*] Stay, sir. You wouldn't follow her to her bedroom?

von Tellheim. Unhappiness? Did she speak of unhappiness?

Francisca. Yes, to be sure, sir: the unhappiness of losing you after . . .

von Tellheim. After what? There's more behind this. What is it, Francisca? Tell me.

Francisca. I was going to say, after she had sacrificed so much for you.

von Tellheim. Sacrificed?

Francisca. Listen, I'll tell you quickly. It is well for you, sir, that you have got free of her like this. Why shouldn't I tell you? It can't remain secret much longer. We have run away! Count von Bruchsall disinherited her because she would not accept a husband of his choosing. Everyone forsook and despised her because of it. What could we do? We resolved to go to the man we . . .

von Tellheim. I've heard enough. Come, let me go and throw myself at her feet.

Francisca. Don't think of such a thing. Go away and thank your lucky stars . . .

von Tellheim. Wretched girl! What do you take me for? No, my dear, that advice did not come from your heart. Forgive my severity.

Francisca. Don't keep me any longer. I must go and see how she is. Something might have happened to her.—Go away now and come back later, if you *want* to come.

[*Exit, after Minna.*]

SCENE VIII

von Tellheim. Francisca !—Oh, I'll wait for you here.—No, the other is more urgent.—When she sees that I am in earnest, she will not deny me her forgiveness. Now I need you, honest Werner ! No, Minna, I am no traitor !

[*Exit hastily.*]

ACT V—SCENE I

The Parlour as in Act III

Enter von Tellheim and Werner from opposite sides.

von Tellheim. There you are, Werner. I have been looking for you everywhere. Where have you been ?

Werner. Looking for you, sir—it's always the way. I have good news for you.

von Tellheim. It's not your news I need now, it's your money. Quick, Werner, give me what you have, and then go and fetch as much more as you can raise

Werner. Beg pardon, sir ? By God, it's just as I said ! He'll borrow money off me when he has it to spare himself !

von Tellheim. You're not trying to back out ?

Werner. Just so that I shan't have anything to reproach him with, he takes with his right hand and gives with his left.

von Tellheim. Don't keep me waiting, Werner. I intend honestly to pay you back ; but when and how, God alone knows.

Werner. So you don't know that the Treasury has orders to pay you your money back ? I've just heard about it from . . .

von Tellheim. What are you chattering about ? Are you letting people tell you the tale ? Don't you see that, if it were true, I should be the first to hear about it ? Come on, Werner, I want money !

Werner. Why, of course, with pleasure ! Here's the hundred gold louis, and here's the hundred ducats. [*Giving him both.*]

von Tellheim. Give the hundred louis to Just. Tell him to redeem the ring he pawned this morning. But where will you get more from, Werner ? I need a lot more.

Werner. Trust me to find that. The man that bought my farm lives in this town. True, he's not due to pay for a fortnight,

but the money's ready, and a little discount of a half per cent . . .

von Tellheim. Well and good, Werner, my dear fellow. You see, you are my only resource, and I really must tell you everything. The young lady here—you've seen her—has had some ill luck . . .

Werner. What a pity !

von Tellheim. But to-morrow she will be my wife.

Werner. Well, that's fine !

von Tellheim. And the day after to-morrow we leave together. I am free to go, and go I will. I'll leave everything here to take care of itself. Who knows whether there may be a bit of good luck in store for me elsewhere ! Come too, if you will. We'll take service again.

Werner. Do you really mean that ? But some place where there's a war, sir ?

von Tellheim. Where else ? Be off, now, Werner, we'll talk about it later.

Werner. Good old Major ! The day after to-morrow ? Why not to-morrow ? I'll raise the lot all right. There's a grand war in Persia, sir. What do you say ?

von Tellheim. We'll think it over. But go now, Werner.

Werner. Hooray ! God save Prince Herachus !

SCENE II

von Tellheim. What has come over me ? My very soul is filled with new life ! My own misfortunes cast me down, made me fractious, blind, inert. Hers lift me up. Now I can look around me freely. I feel willing and able to undertake anything for her sake. But why do I dawdle here ? [*Goes towards Minna's room, but meets Francisca as she comes out.*]

SCENE III

Francisca. So it is really you ? I fancied I heard your voice. What can I do for you, sir ?

von Tellheim. What can you do for me ? What is her ladyship doing ? Tell me that.

Francisca. She's just going out.

von Tellheim. Alone ? Without me ? Where ?

Francisca. Have you forgotten, sir . . .

von Tellheim. Are you mad, Francisca ? I provoked her and

she was offended. I have come to ask her pardon, and she will forgive me.

Francisca. What, after you have taken the ring back, sir?

von Tellheim. Ha, I did that in a stupor. I never thought of it till now. Where did I put it? [*Looking for it.*] Here it is.

Francisca. Is that it? [*Aside, as he pockets it again.*] If only he'd look closer at it!

von Tellheim. She forced it on me, with such bitterness . . . but I have forgotten her bitterness already. A full heart cannot weigh words. . . . But she'll not refuse for a moment to take it back. . . . And have I not hers still?

Francisca. She is expecting you to return hers. But where is it, sir? Please show it me.

von Tellheim. [*Rather embarrassed.*] I—forgot to put it on. Just . . . Just is fetching it.

Francisca. I suppose it is much like the other? Let me look at this one. I love looking at such things.

von Tellheim. Some other time, *Francisca*. Now come. . . .

Francisca. [*Aside.*] He just won't be undeceived.

von Tellheim. What's that? Deceived?

Francisca. I say you are deceived if you think my lady is still a good match. Her own property is nothing considerable. By a bit of self-seeking accountancy her guardians could whittle it down to nothing. She had good expectations of her uncle. But that cruel uncle . . .

von Tellheim. Never mind about him. Am I not man enough to make everything up to her?

Francisca. Listen—she's ringing for me. I must go to her.

von Tellheim. I'll go with you.

Francisca. Don't, for heaven's sake! She has expressly forbidden me to speak to you. At least come in a little after me.

SCENE IV

von Tellheim. [*Calling after her.*] Tell her I'm here. Speak for me, *Francisca*. I'll follow at once. What shall I tell her? When the heart dares to speak no preparations are needed. Only one thing might need reflection—her hesitation, her scruples about throwing herself into my arms in her misfortune, her efforts to pretend to me a happiness that she has lost on my account; to excuse to herself the lack of faith in my honour and in her own worth. Well? I have excused it already! Ah, here she comes!

SCENE V

Enter Minna, as if unaware of the Major's presence.

Minna. Hasn't the carriage come, Francisca? Bring my fan *von Tellheim.* [*Stepping towards her.*] Where are you going, madam?

Minna. [*With an assumed coldness.*] I am going out, Major Tellheim. I think I can guess why you have been at pains to come here again—to return me my ring. Very well, Major Tellheim, be so good as to give it to Francisca. Francisca, take the ring from the Major. I have no time to lose. [*Going.*] *von Tellheim.* [*Barring her way.*] Ah, the news I have just heard, madam! I was unworthy of so much love.

Minna. What, Francisca? Have you . . . ?

Francisca. I have told the Major everything.

von Tellheim. Do not be angry with me, madam! I am no traitor. For my sake you have lost much in the eyes of the world, but not in mine. In mine you have gained immeasurably by this loss. But it was too sudden for you. You were afraid it would make an unfavourable impression on me. At first you sought to conceal it from me. I do not complain of your misgiving; it sprang from an impulse not to lose me. I am proud of that impulse! You found me also unfortunate, and you did not wish to heap sorrow on sorrow. You could not know how much more important your unhappiness would seem to me than my own.

Minna. Very well, sir. But what is done is done. I have released you from your obligation. By taking back your ring . . .

von Tellheim. I did not do it willingly! I feel myself now even more bound than before. You are mine now, Minna, for ever more. [*Taking the ring from his pocket.*] Here, take this for the second time, the pledge of my loyalty.

Minna. Am I to take this ring back? *This* ring?

von Tellheim. Yes, yes, dearest Minna!

Minna. Do you expect me to take *this* one back?

von Tellheim. The first time you took this ring from my hand our circumstances were both equally fortunate. Now they are no longer fortunate, but they are still equal. Equality is ever the surest bond of love. Allow me, dearest Minna. [*Takes her hand to put on the ring.*]

Minna. What? You use force, Major? No, there's no force in this world that can compel me to accept this ring again.

Do you think I am in need of a ring? You see as well as I do that I have here a ring in no way inferior to yours [*Indicating her own ring.*]

Francisca. Well, if he doesn't notice now. . . .

von Tellheim. [*Letting go her hand.*] What's that? I see Fräulein von Barnhelm before me, but I do not hear her. You are pretending, madam. Forgive me for using your own expression.

Minna. [*In her natural voice*] Are you insulted by that word, Major?

von Tellheim. It hurt me.

Minna. [*Touched*] It was not meant to; forgive me, Tellheim.

von Tellheim. Ah, this warm tone tells me that you are coming to yourself, madam, that you still love me, Minna. . . .

Francisca. [*Breaking in.*] A little more and the joke would have gone too far. . . .

Minna. [*Imperiously.*] Pray mind your own business, Francisca.

Francisca. [*Aside, surprised*] Hasn't she had enough yet?

Minna. Yes, sir, it was feminine vanity that made me cold and contemptuous. Away with it! You deserve to find me as straightforward as you are yourself. I love you, Tellheim, I love you still, nevertheless . . .

von Tellheim. No more of that, dearest Minna, no more of that. [*Taking her hand again to put on the ring*]

Minna. [*Withdrawing her hand.*] In spite of that, or rather because of that, I will never permit this—never! How can you think of such a thing, sir? I should have thought your own troubles were enough. You must stay here and by truculence—truculence is the only word that occurs to me at the moment—obtain the fullest satisfaction for your honour, even if while you do so you perish in the extreme of poverty under the eyes of your slanderers!

von Tellheim. So I thought, so I said at a time when I did not know what I was thinking or saying. Anger and suppressed rage had clouded my mind. Love itself, in all its blissful power, could not then disperse those clouds. But Love sent her daughter, pity, who, more familiar with darkness and pain, pierced the mists and opened every gateway of my soul to tender feelings. The motive of self-preservation awoke now, when I had something more precious than myself to preserve, something that I alone could save. Do not be offended by the word pity, madam. We may hear it without humiliation from the innocent cause of our misfortune. I am that cause.

Through me, Minna, you have lost friends and family, home and possessions. In me, through me, you must find all these again, or else I shall have on my conscience the destruction of the sweetest of her sex. Let me not face a future of self-hatred! No, nothing shall keep me longer here. From this moment I will answer with nothing but contempt the injustice that has been shown me here. Is this country the world? Does the sun rise on Prussia alone? Where can I not travel? What country will refuse my services? Even if I had to seek service under the most distant skies, you may follow me with confidence, dearest Minna, we shall want for nothing. I have a friend who will gladly help us. . . .

SCENE VI

Enter a courier

Minna. [Seeing the courier.] Sh! sir!

von Tellheim [To the courier.] For whom are you looking?

Courier. For Major von Tellheim. Ah! I see you are the officer himself. Sir, I am commanded to deliver you [*taking document from a portfolio*] this royal letter.

von Tellheim. To me?

Courier. According to the address . . .

Minna. Do you hear that, Francisca? The Chevalier spoke truth after all!

Courier. [*As Tellheim takes letter*] I beg your pardon, sir. You should have received it yesterday, but I was unable to find you. It was not until to-day that Lieutenant Riccaut told me of your new address when I met him on the Parade.

Francisca. Do you hear that, my lady? That's his "Minister" — "How does he call himself, the Minister out there on the so large place?"

von Tellheim. I am deeply obliged to you for your efforts.

Courier. It is my duty, Major Tellheim, sir. [Exit.]

SCENE VII

von Tellheim. Ah, madam, what is this? What does this letter contain?

Minna. I have no right to extend my curiosity so far.

von Tellheim. No right? You still separate my fate from yours? But why do I hesitate to unseal it? It cannot make me more

unfortunate than I am—no, dearest Minna, it cannot make *us* more unfortunate; but perhaps more fortunate! Permit me, madam. [*Opens and reads letter while the Landlord steals in.*]

SCENE VIII

Landlord [*To Francisca.*] Hist! my pretty dear, a word with you, please.

Francisca. [*Going to him.*] Our landlord? Indeed, we don't ourselves know yet what's in the letter.

Landlord. Who cares about the letter? I've come about the ring. Her ladyship must give it me back at once. Just has come to redeem it.

Minna [*Also going to him.*] Tell him it's already redeemed. And tell him I redeemed it.

Landlord. But . . .

Minna I'll take the responsibility. Be off, now!
[*Exit Landlord.*]

SCENE IX

Francisca. Now, my lady, stop tormenting the poor Major.

Minna. Little intercessor! Can't you see that the knots will soon untangle themselves?

von Tellheim. [*Having read the letter, with lively emotion.*] Ha! Again he has not disappointed me! Oh, madam, what justice! What graciousness! It is more than I had expected! More than I deserved! My fortune, my honour—all restored! Is it indeed no dream? [*Looking at the letter again, as if to reassure himself.*] No, it is no mirage of desire. Read it yourself, madam, read it yourself!

Minna. I am not so intrusive, sir!

von Tellheim. Intrusive? The letter is to me, to your Tellheim,

Minna. It contains something your uncle cannot take from you. You must read it; do, please, read it!

Minna. Well, if it would please you . . . [*Takes letter and reads.*]

“MY DEAR MAJOR VON TELLHEIM,—

“This is to inform you that the business concerning your honour that caused me so much anxiety has been cleared up to your advantage. My brother was informed of the details, and his testimony has proved you more than innocent. The

Treasury has orders to return to you the bill of exchange in question, and to repay you the sums advanced. I have also directed that the queries raised by the Field Cashier's Office in regard to your account be disallowed. Let me hear from you as soon as your health allows you to take up your commission again. I would not willingly dispense with the services of a man of your gallantry and sentiments.

"FREDERICK OF PRUSSIA."

von Tellheim. Well, what do you say to that, madam?

Minna. [*Folding and returning letter.*] I? Nothing.

von Tellheim. Nothing?

Minna. Well yes, this—that your King, who is a great man, may also be a good man. But what is that to me? He is not my King.

von Tellheim. And you have nothing else to say? Nothing about ourselves?

Minna. You are entering his service again. You will be promoted Lieutenant-Colonel, perhaps Colonel! I congratulate you most sincerely.

von Tellheim. Do you know me no better than that? No; since fortune has restored me enough to satisfy the wishes of any sensible man, it shall depend on my Minna alone whether I ever again belong to anyone but herself. My whole life shall be dedicated to your service alone! The service of the great is dangerous and not worth the effort, the servitude, the humiliations it entails. Minna is not one of those vain women who love in their husbands nothing but title and rank. She will love me for my own sake, and for her I will forget the whole world. I became a soldier from partialty—I myself do not know for what political cause, and from a notion that it was good for a man of honour to try his hand at that calling for a time, to familiarize himself with all that danger implies, and to learn coolness and resolution. Only utter necessity could have forced me to make a profession of this experiment, a trade out of this casual occupation. But now that I am no longer under any such compulsion, my sole ambition is to be once again a calm and contented man. I cannot fail to realize that ambition with you, dearest Minna; and in your company I shall continue unshaken in that state. Let us be united to-morrow in the holiest of bonds. After that we will look over the whole wide inhabited world and choose the quietest, happiest, brightest corner that only lacks a happy pair to make it a

paradise. There we will live. There every day of our lives.
. . . What is the matter, dear madam?

[*Minna turns uneasily from side to side, trying to conceal her emotion.*]

Minna [*Composing herself.*] You are very cruel, Tellheim, to paint so charmingly a happiness I must renounce. My loss . . .

von Tellheim. Your loss? What do you mean by your loss? Whatever Minna can lose is not Minna. You are still the sweetest, dearest, most charming, best creature under the sun, all kindness and magnanimity, all innocence and joy!—Here and there a little frivolity; now and then a little obstinacy—so much the better! So much the better! Otherwise, Minna were an angel whom I could only revere with awe, whom I could not love. [*Seizes and attempts to kiss her hand*]

Minna. [*Withdrawing her hand.*] No, no, sir! Why this sudden change? Is this flattering, violent lover the cold Tellheim? Could nothing but his returning good fortune so kindle his ardour? He must allow me to reason for us both during the transient heat of passion. While he could still think clearly I heard him tell me it was but a worthless love that would not scruple to expose its object to contempt. True: but I aspire to a love as pure and as noble as his own. Now that honour calls him, now that a great Monarch courts his allegiance, shall I allow him to give himself up to sentimental dreams with me? Shall I permit the famous soldier to degenerate into a love-sick shepherd? No, Major Tellheim, follow the beckoning of your improving fortunes. . . .

von Tellheim. Very well! If the great world attracts you more, Minna, then let the great world have us! How small, how petty, is this great world! So far you know it only on its gilded side. But, Minna, I am sure you will— Let it be. So far so good. Your perfections will not lack admirers, nor my happiness many to envy me.

Minna. No, Tellheim, I did not mean that. I point you back to the great world by the path of honour, without offering to follow you. There Tellheim would need a wife above reproach. A runaway Saxon miss who threw herself at his head . . .

von Tellheim. [*Starting up and looking fiercely about him.*] Who dares speak so? Ah, Minna, I fear myself when I imagine anyone saying that but you. My fury against him would break all bounds.

Minna. There you are! That is what appals me. You wouldn't endure the slightest taunt against me, and yet day by day you would have to swallow very bitter ones. Now listen, Tellheim, this is what I have decided on, and nothing in the world shall change me . . .

von Tellheim. Before you finish, madam, I implore you, Minna—remember for a moment that you are pronouncing a life or death sentence on me!

Minna. I need no further consideration! As surely as I have returned you the ring with which once you pledged me your troth, as surely as you accepted that ring, so surely will the unhappy Minna never be the wife of the more fortunate Tellheim!

von Tellheim. Are you condemning me to death, madam?

Minna. Equality is the only firm bond of love. If I were happy I should want to live only for your happiness. Even were I unhappy I could have been persuaded to share your unhappiness, be it to increase or to alleviate it. You no doubt will have noticed, before this letter came to put an end again to our equality, that I was only making a pretence of refusing?

von Tellheim. Is that true, madam? My thanks, Minna, that you have not yet pronounced sentence! You want only an unhappy Tellheim? You may have him. [*Coldly.*] It seems to me now that to accept this tardy rehabilitation does not become me; it would be better not to reclaim what has been dishonoured by such a shameful suspicion. Yes, I will behave as if I had not received the letter. This shall be my sole answer to it. [*About to tear up letter.*]

Minna. [*Seizing his hands.*] What are you thinking of, Tellheim?

von Tellheim. Making you my wife.

Minna. Stop!

von Tellheim. Madam, it will irrevocably be torn if you do not quickly change your mind. Then we shall see what *else* you have against me.

Minna. What? You speak to me so? Then shall I, must I, become despicable in my own eyes? Never! She is a worthless creature who is not ashamed to owe all her happiness to the blind tenderness of a man!

von Tellheim. It is false, utterly false!

Minna. Do you dare deny your own words when they come from my mouth?

von Tellheim. Sophistry! Is the weaker sex dishonoured by all

that does not become the stronger? May a man allow himself everything that beseems a woman? Which of us did Nature ordain to be the prop of the other?

Minna Do not be alarmed, Tellheim. I shall not be quite without support, even if I must decline the honour of yours. I shall still have as much as the occasion requires. I reported to our Ambassador He has granted me an interview for to-day. I hope he will take up my case. Time passes. Excuse me, sir . . .

von Tellheim. I'll go with you, madam.

Minna. No, no, Major. Let me go alone.

von Tellheim As soon bid your shadow let you go! Come, madam, let us go wherever you will, to whomsoever you will. I will tell all, friend and stranger alike, a hundred times a day in your presence, with what bonds you have bound me, and with what cruel obstinacy you are trying to sever them. . . .

SCENE X

Enter Just

Just. [*Hurrying in.*] Major von Tellheim, sir!

von Tellheim. What is it?

Just. Come quick, sir!

von Tellheim What do you want? Come over here to me. Tell me what's the matter.

Just. Listen! [*Whispers in his ear.*]

Minna. [*Aside to Francisca*] Do you see what that means, Francisca?

Francisca. Oh, you were cruel! I've been on tenterhooks!

von Tellheim. [*To Just.*] What do you say? It's not possible! . . . She? [*Looking wildly at Minna.*] Say it aloud; say it to her face! Listen to this, madam.

Just. The Landlord says her ladyship has in her possession the ring I pawned with him, saying it was hers, that she recognized it, and she wouldn't part with it. . . .

von Tellheim. Is that true, madam? No, it cannot be!

Minna. [*Smiling.*] And why not, Tellheim? Why cannot it be true?

von Tellheim. Well, suppose it is true. What a fearful light dawns on me! Now I recognize you—false and faithless!

Minna. [*Startled.*] Who is faithless?

von Tellheim. She whom I will no longer name.

Minna. TELLHEIM !

von Tellheim. Forget my name ! You came here to break with me. That's clear. How strange that fate should so often aid the disloyal ! It brought your ring into your hands again. Your cunning succeeded in exchanging it for mine.

Minna. Tellheim, what spectres are you seeing ? Be calm and listen to me.

Francisca. [*Aside.*] It serves her right.

SCENE XI

Enter Werner with a purse of money.

Werner. Here I am again, sir.

von Tellheim. [*Not looking at him*] Who wants you ?

Werner. Here's money—a thousand pistoles.

von Tellheim. I don't want it.

Werner. To-morrow, sir, you can have as much again.

von Tellheim. Keep your money.

Werner. But it's *your* money, sir. I don't think you see who you're talking to.

von Tellheim. Take it away, I say.

Werner. What's the matter ? I'm Werner.

von Tellheim. All kindness is hypocrisy ; all service is deceit.

Werner. Is that meant for me ?

von Tellheim. If you like.

Werner. Why, I only carried out your orders. . . .

von Tellheim. Then obey this one—and get out !

Werner. Major von Tellheim ! [*Angrily.*] Sir, I'm a man . . .

von Tellheim. Then you are something indeed marvellous !

Werner. A man with a temper, too !

von Tellheim. Good ! After all, temper is the best thing about us.

Werner. I beg you, Major . . .

von Tellheim. How many times must I tell you ? I don't need your money.

Werner. [*Angrily*] Then let anyone have it that wants it !
[*Throwing down the purse at his feet and going upstage.*]

Minna. Ah, dear Francisca, I should have taken your advice. I've carried the jest too far. Yet if only he would listen to me ! [*Going to Tellheim.*]

Francisca. [*Not answering Minna, and going to Werner.*] Sergeant-Major . . .

Werner. [*Sullenly.*] Go away !

Francisca. Ugh ! What nice men !

Minna. Tellheim, Tellheim [*von Tellheim bites his nails with rage and turns his face away, refusing to listen.*] Oh, it's too much ! Listen to me. You are mistaken ! It's all a misunderstanding. Tellheim ! Won't you listen to your Minna ?—How could you suspect me so ? I break with you ? I come here for that ? Tellheim !

SCENE XII

Enter two servants, one after the other, from opposite sides of stage.

First servant. Madam, his Excellency the Count ! . . .

Second servant. He's here, my lady.

Francisca. [*Running to the window.*] It is he ! It is he !

Minna. Is it he ? Oh ! now quickly, Tellheim ! . . .

von Tellheim. [*Suddenly coming to himself.*] Who ? Who is coming ? Your uncle, madam ? Your cruel uncle ? Let him come ! Have no fear ! Let him dare offend you, by as much as a look. He will have me to reckon with. . . . Indeed you don't deserve it of me. . . .

Minna. Quickly, Tellheim, embrace me and forget everything . . .

von Tellheim. Oh, if I could be sure you could be sorry for it all !

Minna. No, I cannot be sorry for having obtained this insight into your whole heart. What a man you are ! Embrace your Minna, your happy Minna ! But happier, in nothing happier, than in you. [*Falls into his arms.*] And now let's go to meet him.

von Tellheim. Meet whom ?

Minna. The best of your unknown friends.

von Tellheim. What ? Whom ?

Minna. The Count, my uncle, my father, your father.—My flight, his enmity, my disinheritance—didn't you understand it was all invented ? O credulous knight !

von Tellheim. Invented ? But what about the ring—the ring ?

Minna. Where is the ring I gave back to you ?

von Tellheim. Do you want it back ? Oh, how happy I am ! Here, Minna. [*Taking it from his pocket.*]

Minna. Look at it first.—Oh, there's none so blind as those that

won't see ! Which ring is it ? The one you had from me, or the one I had from you ? Is it not the very one I did not want to leave with the landlord ?

von Tellheim. My God, what's this I hear ? What do I see ?

Minna. Shall I take it back ? Tell me ? Give it to me, give it to me. [*Takes it from his hand and herself puts it on his finger.*] Now, is all well ?

von Tellheim. Where am I ? [*Kissing her hand.*] You malicious angel—to torment me so !

Minna. This is for a pledge, my dear husband, that you shall never play a trick on me but I'll play one on you ! Do you suppose you did not torment me too ?

von Tellheim. O you comedians ! I ought to have found you out !

Francisca. That we are not I'm not cut out for an actress. I shook and shivered and had to put my hand over my mouth.

Minna. I did not find my part easy, either. But will you not come with me ?

von Tellheim. I am still not recovered. How relieved and yet afraid I feel ! As if I had awakened from a dreadful dream !

Minna. We must not delay. I hear him coming.

SCENE XIII

Enter Count von Bruchsal, accompanied by several Servants and the Landlord.

Count. So she got here safely ?

Minna. [*Running to him*] Ah, my father !

Count. Here I am, Minna dear. [*Kissing her*] But what's this, my dear ? Here only four-and-twenty hours and already entertaining friends ?

Minna. Guess who it is ?

Count. Could it be your friend Tellheim ?

Minna. Who else ? Come, Tellheim. [*Leading him towards the Count.*]

Count. Sir, we have never met ; but I thought I recognized you at sight. I hoped it might be you. Embrace me. You have my highest regard. I would welcome your friendship. My niece, my daughter, loves you . . .

Minna. You know it, father ! And is my love blind ?

Count. No, Minna, your love is not blind. But your lover—is dumb.

von Tellheim. [*Embracing the Count.*] Let me recover from my surprise, my father

Count. That's the way, my son! I see that if your tongue is unready your heart can speak. I don't usually much care for officers wearing tunics that colour. [*Pointing to his uniform.*] But you're an honourable man, Tellheim, and an honourable man may wear what cloth he chooses and still be loved.

Minna. Oh, if you knew everything! . . .

Count. What's to prevent me knowing everything? Where are my rooms, Landlord?

Landlord. Will your Excellency be so kind as to step this way?

Count. Come, Minna, come Major.

[*Exit with Landlord and Servants.*]

Minna. Come, Tellheim.

von Tellheim. I'll follow you in a moment, madam. I want a word with this man. [*Turning to Werner*]

Minna. Let it be a very kind one. I think you owe it him—doesn't he, Francisca?

[*Exit, following the Count.*]

SCENE XIV

von Tellheim. [*Pointing to the purse that Werner had thrown down.*] Here, Just, take up that purse and be off home with it. Go on!

[*Exit Just*]

Werner. [*Still standing sullenly in the corner and seeming to pay no attention*] Well?

von Tellheim. [*Approaching him in friendly manner.*] Werner, when can I have the other thousand pistoles?

Werner. [*Suddenly relapsing into a good humour.*] To-morrow, sir, to-morrow.

von Tellheim. I have no need to be your debtor, but I would like to be your treasurer. There should be a guardian for all such generous people as you. You are a kind of spend-thrift—I annoyed you just now, Werner?

Werner. By God, you did, sir!—But still, I ought not to have been such a blockhead. Now I realize it. I deserve a hundred lashes, and I don't care if I get them either. Only no more hard feelings, Major Tellheim, sir!

von Tellheim. Hard feelings? [*Taking his hand*] You may read in my eyes all that I cannot tell you—I should like to see the man that has a better girl and a stouter friend than I.—Wouldn't you, Francisca?

[*Exit.*]

SCENE XV

Francisca. [*Aside.*] Yes Indeed, he is a wonderful man ! I shall never see his like again.—I must say it. [*Shyly, and shamefacedly going up to Werner*] Sergeant-Major . . .

Werner. [*Wiping his eyes*] Well?

Francisca Sergeant-Major . . .

Werner. What is it, little girl?

Francisca Please look at me, Sergeant-Major. . . .

Werner. I can't yet, I don't know what's got into my eye.

Francisca. Oh, but do look at me, please !

Werner. I'm afraid I have been looking at you too much already, little girl—there, now I can see you, what's up, then?

Francisca. Sergeant-Major—don't you want a *Mrs.* Sergeant-Major?

Werner. Do you really mean that, little girl?

Francisca. I do indeed. . . .

Werner. Would you go to Persia with me?

Francisca Wherever you like.

Werner. Would you really? Hallo, Major, don't you boast ! Now I have at least as good a girl and as stout a friend as you ! Give me your hand, little girl. Done with you ! In ten years time you'll be either the General's Lady or a widow.

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